WHAT LONDON'S QUISLINGS WHISPER *By Claude Cockburn*

NEW MASSES

FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY AUGUST 19, 1941

THE SOVIET PRESS

What it is and what it is not. The truth about 9000 newspapers in 70 languages.

by Andrew Rothstein

WHITE PAPERS AND RED

Retracing the moves that led to the war. New evidence. by Joseph Starobin

OKLAHOMA ORDEAL *The "mystery woman" of the trials tells her story.*

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Between Ourselves

SUMMERTIME weekends in Manhattan are traditionally that time when the out-of-towners come in to look at the Empire State Building and the city dwellers go out to look at the cows. One of our editors recently managed to get well beyond the more familiar rural haunts "within easy distance of the city" and struck out for real pastures of the old-fashioned homey kind, with cows that still jump at the sound of an automobile horn. He found one somewhere in Delaware—he isn't sure yet of the exact location—but he got to look at the cows only long enough to make sure they were really cows, just like those in the movies. Practically all his time was taken up by the farm family, consisting of father, grandfather, mother, three sons, and a daughter. All of them wanted to know what was going on, not in the big city but in the nation and especially in the world. Yes, they got a daily newspaper, they listened to the radio. But they wanted to know: what's *really* going on? It seems that the paper didn't tell them so very much and as for the radio everyone who broadcast speeches or gave the news had a different opinion from the other broadcasters.

You're wrong: the editor did *not* say, "Read NEW MASSES." He noted all their inquiries carefully, to keep in his memory as questions that must be answered for the thousands of people who hunger for something in the way of information besides their daily paper and radio. They asked about the defense program; about the USSR; about the America First crowd—who were they exactly? It was a three-hour conversation, and even subtracting time for answers, a vast number of questions can be asked in three hours. Many of them we have tried to answer in these pages, many others we have answered in part. But this is a time for questions, with each week bringing fresh ones. It is a time that demands answers. We don't promise to provide them all but we'll do our best.

One thing that people all over want to know about is the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. What sort of land is this, whose people are the first to demolish the terrifying legend of Nazi military invincibility? In this issue we print the first article of a series on Soviet life and culture, Andrew Rothstein's description of the Soviet press. We also have on hand an article on Soviet family life, by Beatrice King, noted British writer who has made a firsthand study of Soviet institutions and is the author of a book on education in the USSR. Other pieces on various phases of life in the socialist sixth of the world will appear at regular intervals.

Another series which NM will publish shortly concerns the little business man, his place in the defense program, etc. The articles on this subject are by Frank J. Wallace, whom regular NM readers will remember as the author of several economic analyses published in these pages. And next in our series on the American Negro is an article by Herbert Aptheker, editor of the series itself, on the Negro and American historiography. This will be followed by Samuel Putnam's discussion of the Negro in Latin America and other contributions from authorities on the Negro's historic role in America.

If you happened to miss A. B. Magil's article on Earl Browder's anti-fascist writings (August 5 issue), or if you lost your copy of that NM and wish you had saved it to read the article again or show someone else—or if you have done none of these things but just happen to be one of those many readers who tell us it's a pity that articles like that don't get printed in pamphlet form for widespread distribution—then you will be especially glad to learn that Magil's piece will indeed appear in the near future as a pamphlet. We'll let you know more soon about when and how it can be obtained.

A friend of Alexander Bergman, young NM poet who died recently in Montefiore hospital after a four-year siege of tuberculosis, sends us the following suggestion, which we feel will evoke an enthusiastic response from our readers:

"Though NEW MASSES has paid Alec a fitting tribute in printing the splendid epitaph by Joy Davidman in commemoration of his heroic contribution to the cause of socialism, still to us who were his fellow patients at Montefiore Hospital and to whom he had given companionship and comfort, it is our opinion that this should be but the initial gesture towards the full recognition of his work.

"Consequently his friends at the sanatorium where I am now staying [in Denver] make the following suggestion to NEW MASSES. That a prize called the Alexander F. Bergman award be given yearly for the outstanding poem that is contributed to NEW MASSES. Because NEW MASSES poets do not contribute to its pages for monetary gain, the reward can be a plaque, scroll or any other trophy suited to the purpose. With an eye to defraying any costs which may arise if such a plan is feasible, Alec's friends here have raised a hard-gotten six dollars. We also know that there are many other friends of his who would register their approval of the project and subscribe to its cost."—W. M.

Any donations or further suggestions for carrying out this plan may be sent direct to NM offices.

Who's Who

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN is a journalist working in London. His article on the Soviet press, written before the outbreak of the Soviet-Nazi war, is reprinted from the *Anglo-Soviet Journal*. . . . Paul Roberts is the pseudonym of a Washington newspaperman. . . . Millicent Lang is a graduate student specializing in contemporary literature. . . . Grace Hutchins is on the staff of Labor Research Association. . . . Claude Cockburn was formerly editor of the newsletter *The Week* and was Washington correspondent for the London *Times*.

THIS WEEK

NEW MASSES, VOLUME XL, NO. 8

August 19, 1941

What London's Quislings Whisper *by Claude Cockburn* 3
The Soviet Press *by Arnold Rothstein* 4
White Papers and Red *by Joseph Starobin* 8
Nazi Military Fables *by Colonel T* 12
Gestapo on the Potomac *by Paul Roberts* 14
Oklahoma Ordeal *by Elizabeth Green* 16
Gropper's Cartoon 18
Editorial Comment 19

REVIEW AND COMMENT

Sholokhov's Characters *by Samuel Sillen* 22
Understating the Problem *by Grace Hutchins* 24
Minor Moralities *by Millicent Lang* 25
The Uninquiring Reporter *by Charles Humboldt* . . . 26
Brief Reviews 26

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Fantasy and Fun *Movie Reviews by Alvah Bessie and Joy Davidman* 29
A New Almanac Album 30
Artwork by Clinton, Frederick Michaels, Rodney, Stevenson.

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NEW MASSES

VOLUME XL AUGUST 19 NUMBER 8

WHAT LONDON'S QUISLINGS WHISPER

The "Wait and See" brigade, cables Claude Cockburn, is blaming America for the failure to open up another front. A swing around the globe with stops in Ireland and Australia.

London (by cable).

SORTING essentials from non-essentials in the background of Anglo-American relations during this week of major developments, the best-informed inside observers here give the following round-the-horizon picture of the situation against which immediate developments have to be seen.

First, there is the question of the degree to which the British government can dare, in the face of all sorts of objections and underground obstructions by the "Wait and See" brigade, to awaken an alternative front somewhere in Europe. This in turn, or so they say around Whitehall, depends above all upon the American attitude. It depends, that is to say, in two ways: on one hand, in regard to military practicality, and on the other, in regard to the ability of "activists" here to persuade doubters and weary willies that if Britain is a starter in this race, the civilized world will bet its shirt on Britain.

In West End clubs and other places the Quislings are conducting a somewhat forlorn whispering campaign on the basis of the latest statements by American isolationists to the effect that solidarity of the British people with the Soviet Union now renders the war no longer "purely for democracy." Aged gentlemen who have never previously spoken of democracy without a dirty look, are now urgently explaining that the great American democracy may be alienated from the great British democracy "if we go too far alongside the Bolshies." More important than this, however, is the fact that there exist, rightly or wrongly, genuine doubts in some circles here as to the feasibility of major offensive action by Britain anywhere without solid assurance of greater cooperation—coordinated cooperation is the new fashionable way of putting it—by the United States. Hence, such assurance is of vital importance in relation to the Eastern Front and the possibilities of relief from the West through any new and practical arrangement reached between London and Washington.

Point two is the anxiety arising here regarding the American industrial and financial position in terms of possible aid for Britain and the Soviet Union. It is, of course, natural that in the City where elements lurk who are eager to avoid or postpone such aid, there should be a suggestion that civilian consumption in the United States is currently on a scale which precludes any totally effective industrial assistance for a long time to come. The figures of American civilian consumption and of stock orders by civilian firms are being tossed around in somewhat influential City circles as proof that American aid will not be very substantial for a while, and that therefore it will be impossible for Britain to undertake any offensive during such a period—particularly because shipping facilities for the supply of the "second front" will be inadequate. It is not difficult to see how these underground maneuvers, directed equally against Britain and America, play into the hands of Hitler's new peace offensive. There are, however, many answers to the argument of "inadequacy" which are being discussed in strictly practical detail here.

This, according to point three of what "they" are saying, comes down to a matter of bases, which, of course, is not the whole story but is a large part of it. The question of Dakar and other possible points of American reinforcement on this side of the Atlantic has been pretty fully discussed in the press. From conversations with people who ought to know, my own impression is that sooner or later the question of Irish bases will come into the center of the picture. And the center will be not Dublin but Belfast. True, according to latest information, DeValera has again privately declared that he absolutely refuses any "bargaining" on the question of partition, on the ground that every country has a right to its own unity. DeValera says it is monstrous to suggest that an arrangement might be effected whereby in exchange for facilities for Anglo-American forces in Irish bases, London might bring pressure on north Ireland to reach at least a temporary compromise with DeValera on the question of partition, that is, somehow reuniting northern Ireland and Eire proper.

It is certain that a fight on this issue in Belfast would at once expose the real character of the forces not only of Ulster, which is simply a somewhat moldering collection of political racketeers. It would also force an open declaration of position in London by those who would be compelled to state whether they were more interested in dancing ritual dances around the grave of Sir Edward Carson [a die-hard opponent of Home-Rule for Ireland] or in achieving the basis of a united defense and offense against Hitler.

Similarly on the other side of the border there exists strong suspicion that DeValera's attitude is considerably influenced by his well known connections with the most reactionary elements of the Catholic Church. It is probably no mere coincidence—at least nobody here supposes it is—that the Dublin government has chosen this moment to seize without the slightest justification a number of Soviet ships, although the government several weeks ago invited them to discharge their cargo in Eire ports under a solemn guarantee that they would not be seized. The Soviet embassy in London has delivered the sharpest protests to Dublin and has given notice that it reserves the right of full compensation. It is supposed here that the Dublin government's extraordinary behavior is connected with the attempt of DeValera and a section of the Catholic leadership, represented in a part—but only a part—of the Catholic press, to maintain an openly hostile attitude to the Anglo-Soviet alliance without committing themselves to a public alliance with Hitler.

According to the most recent word reaching me from Dublin, DeValera replied to questions on the latest situation by simply repeating what he had said before—namely, that his ideal is "permanent neutrality" for Ireland on "the Swiss model." He added that he saw no reason why, if Switzerland could remain permanently neutral at the crossroads of continental Europe, Ireland could not remain equally permanently neutral at the crossroads of the western world.

Continuing their "tour of the horizon," insiders claim that the latest developments in Australia are proof that the "ring" of Anglo-American resistance to the Axis is "tightening." For it is assumed here with a certain amount of resignation that in the present circumstances Australian policy is determined considerably more by Washington than by London—this quite apart from the gossipy reports of personal differences between Menzies and Churchill, following the former's London visit. There are those in fact who already believe that Australia must have received some kind of guarantee, directly or indirectly from Washington. In any case it is notable here that there has been a considerable slump in the prestige and influence of those financial powers who until very recently were able almost openly to negotiate with Dutch oil men in Batavia on the basis of an agreement on the one hand, between Japanese buyers and Batavian oil sellers, and on the other, between Batavian oil companies and British capital interested therein.

CLAUDE COCKBURN.

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THE SOVIET PRESS

Nine thousand newspapers published in seventy languages. No press lords and no orders from advertisers. An army of worker and peasant correspondents. The network of wall newspapers.

IT WOULD perhaps be helpful, before describing the Soviet press as it is, to say what it is not. Contrary to the belief fostered by many people who ought to know better, there is no ministry of propaganda or its equivalent in the USSR. Most of the editors are probably Communists, but the Communist Party of the Soviet Union does not issue careful tables weekly of what to say and what not to say on every subject that may arise, how many inches of space to give it, and so forth. This picture, copied from the well known originals on view in certain European capitals, is usually circulated by those who want arguments for their thesis that the USSR is just one more "totalitarian" country. It is not the only sphere in which they have to manufacture their facts. The Communists and non-Communists who edit the Soviet press have to use their intelligence, like any other citizen. It may well be that the transmission by radio or cable of the morning's editorial in the Moscow *Pravda* is hailed with satisfaction by the editor of a district or collective-farm newspaper 6,000 miles away. But he is not obliged to reproduce it. He can more genuinely use it as a guide to the topic of the hour.

The Soviet press, in fact, is not private property. It has no press lords to dictate policy to editors and to send thunderbolts out of a clear sky to wreck carefully laid plans for the day an hour before going to press, with a little signed note. No one makes millions out of the Soviet press, and there are no debenture holders or dividends to consider. Advertisers beg for space. The Soviet press is the property of public bodies and of groups of citizens in their various capacities—as trade unionists, collective farmers, Red soldiers, young people. More than anywhere else in the world the Soviet press is first and foremost an organ of opinion—informed opinion, self-critical, thirsty for still more and better information, constructive, unresting, and full of socialist patriotism—which means, not that a Soviet citizen is better than anybody else but that the common people, with power in their hands, can do anything and do it successfully.

There are approximately 9,000 newspapers in the Soviet Union, published in seventy languages, with a daily print of 38,000,000 copies. For purposes of comparison, it may be mentioned that there are a little over 1,700 comparable newspapers in the United Kingdom for a population of roughly one-quarter that of the USSR. Their circulation, however, is higher in proportion, totaling 26,000,000 copies. Were it not for a shortage of paper the circulation of the Soviet press would be several times higher. This will be better understood if one mentions that in 1913, when the total print of the 859 newspapers was only 2,700,000 copies, two-thirds of the paper came from abroad. Thus the Soviet Union, which does not import any paper, has had to construct the paper works necessary for pushing up circulation from under a million copies twenty-two years ago to the 38,000,000 of today. Those who know the difficulty of building up a papermaking industry will appreciate what an achievement this is.

Taking the Soviet press in its broadest features, a comparison with the press of Czarist days is most enlightening. Out of the 2,700,000 copies of Czarist days, 2,000,000 were accounted for by Moscow and St. Petersburg, that is, by what in England would be called the "National" newspapers. The circulation of the All-Union press (i.e., the newspapers which circulate throughout the USSR) has grown to over 9,000,000, it is true. But what is this expansion compared with the growth of the 700,000 which supplied the remainder of the Czarist empire into the 4,000,000 print of the 230-odd papers of the Republics; the 17,000,000 print of the 300 regional and territorial newspapers; the 6,000,000 print of the rural district and town papers, 3,600 in number. There the expansion is one of quantity become quality. The center of gravity has shifted from the capitals to the periphery. And as the periphery was and is the workers and peasants (who account for the huge increase in the capitals as well), one may say that the expansion of the press is a faithful reflection of the shifting of power—from the landlords, capitalists, and their dependents to the workers and the peasants.

There is another immensely important feature of this expansion. In it is reflected the tremendous cultural advance of the former subject peoples of the Czarist empire, now equal peoples in the Soviet Union. The number of newspapers in the Russian language increased by eight times between 1913 and 1938—from 775 to 6,362. But the number of newspapers in non-Russian languages increased by no less than twenty-six times—from eighty-four (most of them little sheets with a meager circulation among the middle class) to 2,188. Here also figures have a political meaning: the substitution of a union of equal peoples, with full and free access to education, for the Czarist "prison of nations."

The various types of Soviet newspaper have their own distinctive features, all of them characteristic of Soviet society—a society in which production is for use and not for profit, in which consequently the ultimate master is the working people, on whom falls the responsibility of the master to stimulate improvement and correct faults. For this purpose there is no one else to do the work—"no saviors from on high to deliver," as the battlesong ran in the long dark years before the Revolution—and consequently the press has become a mighty weapon of the people for encouragement, education, and criticism in a measure undreamed of and impossible in any society

"Pravda's" streamlined editorial offices in Moscow.

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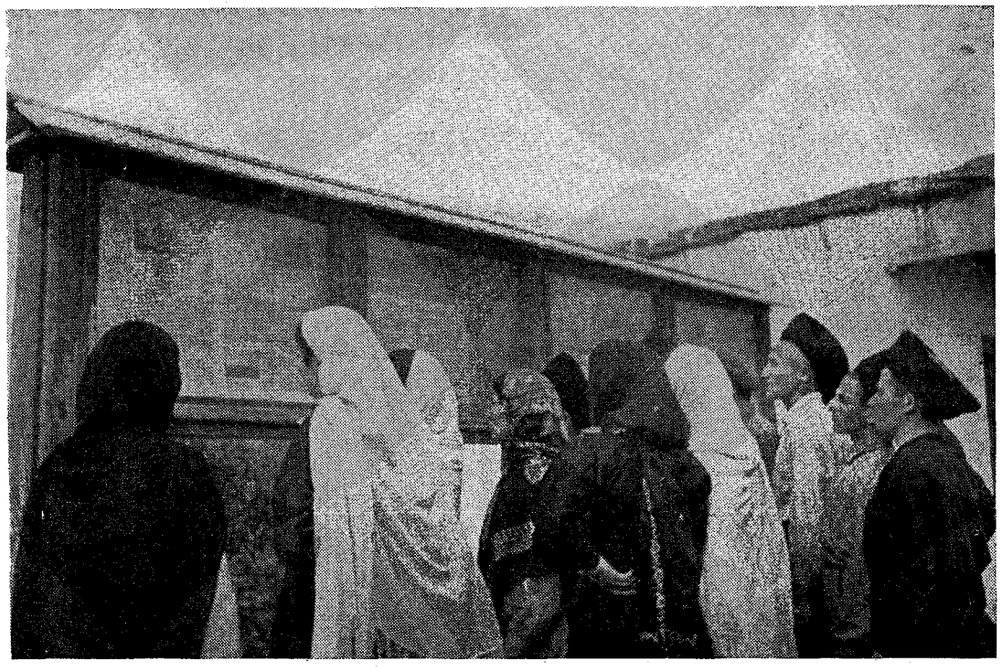
where newspapers belong to wealthy individuals.

There are the national papers—*Pravda* (organ of the Communist Party, with a circulation exceeding 2,000,000) and its vigorous and independent children, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (organ of the Young Communist League) and *Pionerskaya Pravda* (organ of the Young Pioneers, with a circulation of 850,000). There is the more official *Izvestia* (organ of the Soviets of Deputies of the Working People, with a circulation of over 1,600,000); *Trud* (organ of the Central Council of Trade Unions, with a circulation of 500,000); and a number of trade union newspapers—the railwaymen's *Goudok,* the teachers' *Uchitelskaya Gazeta,* and a host of others, published jointly by the central committees of the unions concerned and the appropriate government departments, such as the food and the light industries, engineering, water transport, banking and finance, etc. In a country where the trade unions feel themselves as responsible for successful production as the departments of state, such a combination is natural. Then there are the military and naval papers, the *Krasnaya Zvezda* and the *Krasny Flot,* organs of their respective People's Commissariats. There is even an art workers' newspaper, *Sovietskoe Iskousstvo,* appearing on alternate days because of the shortage of paper.



Mountain people at a village newsstand in the Daghestan Republic. Before 1917 these people had no written language of their own. Now they have fifty-two newspapers printed in ten different languages.

The structure of these leading newspapers is more or less the same. On the front page is the "spot" news in home and foreign affairs, with a solid lead article of usually one and a half columns.* There is a page of foreign news, both telegrams and articles or short notes, and another page of what may be termed "fighting" home news—the distinguishing feature of the Soviet newspaper: correspondents' reports, usually in acutely critical vein, of the achievements and defects of this or that factory, country district, state farm, public office or institution, and (always) party organization. The reporters do not mince words of either praise or blame. Each of these critical articles, as a general rule, is the result of days and sometimes weeks of preliminary investigation of the original contribution, with the editorial staff checking and sifting with the persons or organizations criticized, testing the accuracy of the facts with more responsible bodies, and so on. Consequently, while there is an occasional comeback from the indignant manager, director, or secretary concerned, for the most part he takes his medicine in the spirit in which it is meant—not merely as a corrective for him personally, but as a real education, better than any textbook "examples," for the workers concerned. Then there is usually a page of "general news" in which crime and divorce stories are conspicuous by their absence, except when the offense involved raises issues of general social or political importance. For what the press elsewhere calls "human interest," the Soviet newspaper substitutes true-life sketches of local activities, the ups and downs of a collective farm or factory, a school, or a Red Army unit, rather than spicy details of other people's private linen cupboard.

What few advertisers there are go on the back page. *Pravda* and *Izvestia* print little more than a guide to the day's theaters and films, with a bi-weekly radio program and, in *Izvestia,* the foreign exchange rates. *Trud* recently carried three notices of vacancies for students in technical colleges, and an advance announcement of a coming musical film. *Krasnaya Zvezda,* on the same day, had merely the notice of a public dissertation for a degree in technical science by a student at the Red Army Academy of Mechanization and Motorization. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* had no less than seven notices of vacancies in various military, aviation, and technical academies, completely filling its "advertisement" space. *Industria* presented much the same spectacle, except that its notices were entirely from technical colleges, and in addition there was an announcement that at Leningrad the draughtsmen's office of the People's Commissariat for the Navy undertakes the drawing of plans for ship-repairing works, ports, and so forth; while a nickel works at Ufalei, in Cheliabinsk region, is selling three surplus machines. The only newspaper carrying—in addition to all these types of notice—advertisements in the sense which would occur to readers elsewhere, is the Moscow evening paper, *Vechernaya Moskva.* In addition to theater guides and educational notices, this newspaper fills its back page with demands by factories all over the Soviet Union for skilled and unskilled workers, an advertisement of the cafes at the Moscow Grand Hotel, and a large number of "classified advertisements." These offer to buy or exchange rooms, but also deal with the sale and purchase of gramophones, shotguns, pianos, bicycles, and similar articles. As can be seen, advertisers in the Soviet Union are not in a position to dictate policy.

A very great part in the Soviet national newspapers is played by dramatic, literary, and film criticism and information.

Tens of millions of Soviet citizens have had their introduction to the works of Dickens and Byron, Pushkin and Lermontov, the great poet of Iran, Firdausi, the great epics of the previously subjected nations (like the *Hero in the Tiger Skin* of the Georgian Rustavelli), from the immense anniversary numbers—sometimes series of numbers—of the Soviet press. So also with the works of musicians like Tschaikowsky, scientists like Lomonosov and Charles Darwin; and with the national music and dances of the "brother peoples" of the USSR, whose art in former days was so much caviar to the general public—strange, incomprehensible, and "primitive," the preserve at best of a tiny group of specialists—as is still the art of colonial peoples in the great empires.

The newspapers of the Federal Republics, published in the principal capitals and great industrial centers—the Baku *Rabochi,* the Tbilisi (Tiflis) *Kommunisti,* the Kiev *Visti,* the Novosibirsk *Sovietskaya Sibir,* and many others which play a leading part in educating and informing public opinion outside Moscow and Leningrad—are built in the main on the same lines. In this all of them take their inspiration from the leading paper of the Russian working class, *Pravda,* first and oldest of the Bolshevik daily newspapers, the pattern of contact with the daily lives of the working masses, of ruthless lighting up of dark corners and cleaning out of festering sores. *Pravda* is absolutely unparalleled in world history as

* Since this article was written before the Nazi invasion, the author does not mention the military news which undoubtedly dominates the front page.

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the focusing point at once of discussion, criticism, and construction: collective agitator, propagandist, and organizer in 1940 with its 2,200,000 circulation as in 1912, when its circulation was 200,000. Not by chance has the day of its foundation in that year—May 5—become an annual event in the Soviet Union, the "Day of the Bolshevik Press," when newspapers great and small review their achievements and shortcomings, after the fashion of *Pravda*.

Then there are the town and country papers, many of them dailies (in the Ukraine, for example, 109 were dailies out of a total of 473 district papers in November 1938), and the others appearing two or three times a week. For the most part these are four-page papers, giving the main national and local news in tabloid form on the front page, again with a short leading article; half a page at least of the principal international news, again severely tabloid, usually on the back page; and the middle two pages full of the life, work, and strivings of local people in field and factory, in school and hospital. These district papers, unknown to the foreign correspondents in the Moscow cafes, are the true driving wheel through the length and breadth of the Soviet Union, which brings into motion the public opinion of the majority of its 183,000,000 inhabitants.

Another case out of thousands, but one which is likely to become historic, is that of the little paper which lived only three months during the construction of the Great Ferghana Canal. This huge enterprise, aiming at the irrigation of a vast territory which had lain parched for hundreds of years, was undertaken by the collective farmers of Central Asia themselves. It was 270 kilometers in length, with forty-three sections. One hundred and fifty thousand collective farmers turned out as a body, with men, women, and young people coming together from villages for miles around the canal's length. There were 3,000 intellectuals—technicians, engineers, medical staff, teachers, agitators. The fifty issues of the paper, *Stalin's Building Job,* played an [illegible] *Izvestia* has described this

[illegible] among the fields and in the step[illegible] the high roads. The work went on amid[illegible] olitical enthusiasm. In such days we could [illegible]e this camp of peoples without political int[illegible]ion, without a telegram from Moscow, without [illegible]curate news of the situation abroad. A simple telegram about the war in the West and the destruction of thousands of lives there, read in Ferghana, on the background of this unparalleled creative advance on nature, replaced hundreds of agitators and aroused among the builders pride in their country and their work. That is how the type of newspaper was determined—all that was new, fresh, and up to date out of the life of the USSR and foreign countries, and all that was important—rapidly, compactly, and vividly—about the people and affairs of the canal. The editorial office was at Ferghana, with two cars for urgent assignments. Five to seven journalists were constantly in the sections, not more than three to five days in each. Their role was to organize articles from party workers, engineers, and collective farmers; to supply a piece of information or a sketch; and at night to link up with the office straight from the digging, some new man, so that he himself could tell about his work, practically under the stenographer's pencil. Between 10 AM and noon everyone on the job would be reading this story in the paper. The editorial board had only fifty issues to put out, and it had no time for trial numbers. The paper became necessary and sought after from the very first issue. 'WHAT WE ARE BUILDING" proclaimed the streamer frontpage headline. The collective farmers were given the picture and the magnitude of the work, the aims of the canal, the scale of the organization. Every issue of the paper had its feature. "LOOK AFTER THE CANAL BUILDERS," called the second number. The third told how the collective farmers were coming out on the job with Stalin as their slogan. The next gave a broad picture of the first day of mass work. The fifth issue spoke of the great force of competition. All the news came from the spot, from the very mass.

This brief extract will perhaps explain a little more clearly why ordinary Soviet collective farmers live with their paper and by it.

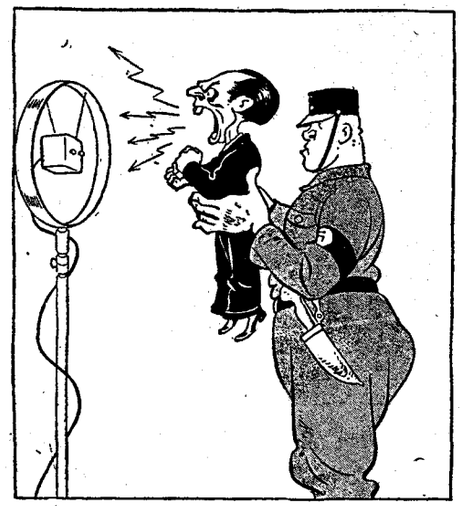
At this point the army and navy papers—corps, divisional, brigade, fleet, and squadron press—deserve mention, because fundamentally they are of the same type as these district and town papers just mentioned. The criticism is there, as fervent, as effective, and as healthy as in the civilian papers, and not in the least injurious to discipline—if only because the officers spring from the same class as the rank and file. Naturally in the local news, accounts of operations and improvements, technical articles, problems of discipline, training, and conduct, take the place of the production problems in the civilian press. Here again it will perhaps be more interesting to let Red Army journalists speak for themselves:

I remember three cases. The first, Peter Orlov, a Red soldier in the frontier guards, received a letter. To his surprise, it was an official communication. Whom could it be from? It turned out to be from his local paper. The editorial board was asking him, as a fellow-villager, to send them an article. I saw how Orlov, coming back from fatigue duty, sat down to write the article, and then went to the political commissar. And when the article was ready the commissar looked it over and praised him. [From *Pravda.*]

And here is an incident at the front, during the Finnish war, from *Krasnaya Zvezda:*

One after another privates and commanders came into the little hut on the borders of the wood. Many of them came straight from patrol, leaving their skis at the door. Many had been all day in the trenches and strong-points. There were young recruits as well. The Red Army newspaper *Heroic Campaign* had proposed that a conference be organized to exchange battle experiences. This proposal had been taken up by the fighters led by Commissar Astakhov. Delegates were elected in the woods and in the trenches. The conference took place in the frontal zone. The delegates came fully armed, ready at any moment to return to battle. Outside the guns went on roaring, but the conference went on according to all the rules. We elected a Standing Orders Committee; true, the room was so full that the members of the committee had to remain in their places. It was impossible to get through to the table, on which a little kerosene lamp was flickering. The speakers took the floor with their theses ready. Machine-Gunner Yerokhin began his speech: "Comrades, participating in this conference, my fellow-fighters have instructed me to send you fighting greetings from the First Machine Gun Company, and particularly from the first platoon, of which I am a member." There were often witty interjections with laughter and applause. Without noticing it, the delegates created an atmosphere in no way different from that of a real conference under peacetime conditions. The speeches were exceptionally interesting. They told us how to go on patrol, how to observe fire-discipline; they spoke of comradeship in battle and of the Red soldier's feeling of responsibility. The conference unquestionably was worth a full report in the paper. In our next number we printed a stenogram, put in all the interjections, fully retaining the special features of every speech. [illegible] a few days had passed when similar co[illegible] began to take place everywhere. The offi[illegible]

CARTOONS FROM THE SOVIET PRESS.



— Итак, повторяю еще раз: истинный ариец должен быть высок, строен, белокур, голубоглаз, с высоким длинным черепом!

"I repeat. The genuine Aryan must be tall, blonde, blue-eyed, with a high straight forehead."

Спешное урегулирование некоторых внутренних разногласий

Hastily Fixing Up An Inner Party Dispute.

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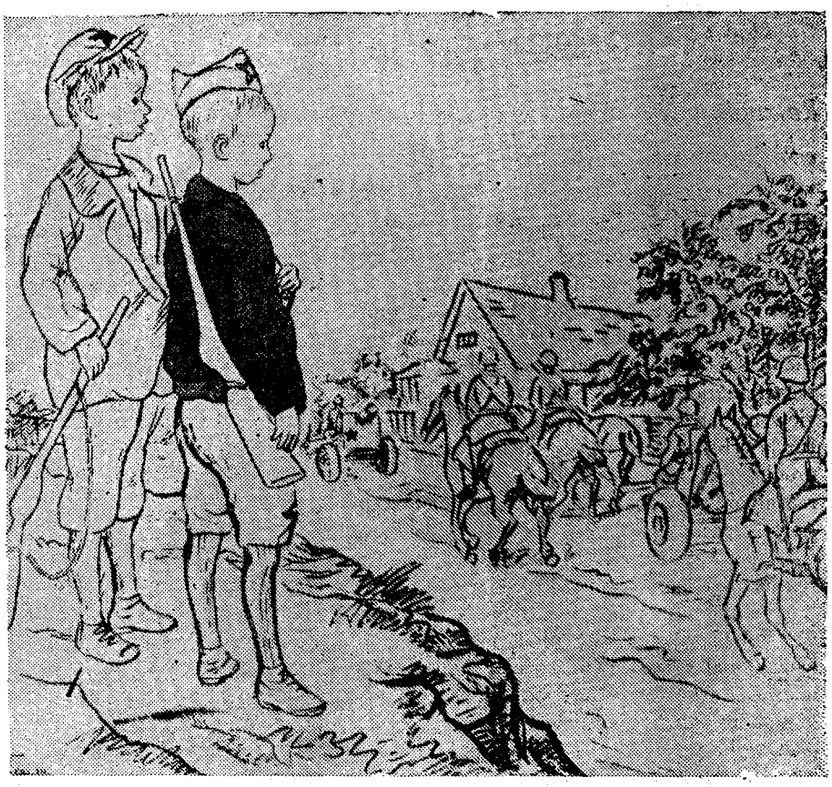

FROM THE SOVIET SATIRICAL WEEKLY "CROCODILE."

In the suburbs of Vichy: "Well now you can open up the Cabinet meeting."
"No, we can't start till the Minister of Justice arrives."

"I bet I can fire that cannon as well as our soldiers can, but to ride for two hours by the appletrees and not pick a single apple—that's something I don't get."

to get full reports, written by the Red soldiers themselves.

It is time to say a little about a further variety of Soviet newspaper—the printed factory newspaper, of which there are many hundreds, appearing sometimes daily, sometimes two or three times weekly. In their case it is rare that one finds news and articles on more remote home affairs, or on international affairs, except where occasionally workers in similar industries abroad are concerned. After all, these newspapers appear in industrial centers, or at any rate in industrial settlements close to some railway by the very nature of their existence, and consequently the ordinary press is more available than in the case of the smaller press. But in return the factory newspapers are able to concentrate exclusively on the problems of the community they serve; and those who chatter about the "apathy of Soviet life," the "lack of individual freedom of conscience," the "intellectual enslavement" of the Soviet people, ought to be obliged to take a compulsory six or eight weeks' dose of this press. It might begin to dawn on them that for vigor of thinking and courage in speaking one's thoughts, the Soviet worker is hard to beat.

Not included in any of the foregoing statistics, but nevertheless an integral part of the Soviet press—one may say its foundation stone under modern conditions—are the wall newspapers. These have often been described. They are essentially hand written, with headings painted and photographs or cartoons mounted by hand, very rarely typed, and are always done by a voluntary group of workers, peasants, employees, Red soldiers, teachers, children—wherever they appear. For a wall newspaper is essentially the most local of all local papers, reflecting the life of one shop in a works, one field unit in a collective farm, one room in a barracks or section in a warship, one class in a school, where all know one another and where speech can accordingly be still more frank and criticism still more biting, without excessive personal offense. The wall newspaper appears weekly, fortnightly, sometimes monthly. Occasionally, during important campaigns in large factories, there have been cases when wall newspapers appeared daily. The Stalin Motor Works in Moscow, already mentioned, has not only its printed paper with 15,000 circulation, but twenty-three daily wall newspapers in the principal shops, and no less than 326 periodical wall newspapers in its territory. Every one of these is fighting for the success of the planning and production, the health and well-being of the workers, in its particular sector of the works; 350 spare-time editors, 6,000 engineers, technicians, and workmen act as worker correspondents of this vast network of newspapers—these are surely something unique both as pioneers in production and public spirit, and as recruits to the army of future fulltime journalists, should they feel so disposed.

The wall newspapers are supposed to have begun with the printed bulletins of news for posting up on walls, issued by the Rosta Agency (precursor of Tass) during the civil war. When the millions of Red soldiers went back to production, and faced a fight for economic reconstruction no less severe than that from which they had just emerged, they brought with them the idea of wall newspapers, and adapted it to their purposes. In 1922 there were a few hundreds of such wall newspapers; by 1924 there were 5,000; by 1926, 27,000; by 1928, 50,000. Today it is believed that there are over 1,000,000 wall newspapers in factories, state and collective farms, offices, educational institutions, and Red army and fleet units. Some indication of the magnitude of this network is given by the announcement of *Pravda* that 135,000 of the best editors and members of editorial boards have been accepted into correspondents' courses on mass instruction in literature and journalism, reinforced by fortnightly "consultations," which will be organized at the offices of the district newspapers.

Out of this school of wall newspapers has graduated the bulk of the tremendous army of workers and peasant correspondents who, following the initiative of the old *Pravda* of thirty years ago, carry on the basic work of the Soviet press. In October 1924 the *Communist Calendar* estimated their numbers at under 10,000. Fifteen years later Vera Golenkina, editor of the *Uchitelskaya Gazeta,* put their numbers at 3,000,000. Men and women, young and old, civilian and military, Russians, Ukrainians, Bashkirs, Jews, Georgians, Tartars—these are the immense leaven of socially awake and active members of Soviet society who not only make the Soviet press a true reflection of that society, but play an immeasurable part in making Soviet society itself the ever young, energetic, progressive thing it is.

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN.

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WHITE PAPERS AND RED

Retracing the moves that led to the war. New light on the background of the non-aggression pact. The continuity of Soviet policy. First of a series by Joseph Starobin.

THESE are times of a great historical reckoning, and the Soviet Union's "magnificent resistance" against German fascism represents a challenge which the academic and journalistic world cannot ignore. The facts about the background of the present war demand reexamination. It is necessary to take another view of the past two years, to go back even further, beyond the non-aggression pact to the problems of Munich. It becomes necessary to reevaluate previous conceptions and misconceptions, especially in the western world, about the character of socialism and fascism, and the relationship between socialism and democracy. To be sure, the Soviet Union's epic struggle is proving to be the most gigantic educational process of our time. The average man is settling the question which troubled him about Finland or about the non-aggression pact, as he reads his daily newspaper. And the case for the Soviet Union, concealed and distorted as it has been, today gets much more than the benefit of the doubt.

In fact, millions of people are going much deeper. They are inquiring how it came about that the Soviet people, without benefit of the profit motive, were capable of planning, building, and operating an economic system which enables them to stand off the most powerful armies in human history. The spectacle of the Soviet individual—so resourceful, so intelligent, so self-reliant and yet so well integrated with his fellow-men—the spectacle of the Soviet human being giving such tenacious battle already causes people to wonder whether the things they have been told about the incompatibility of socialism and individual freedom can possibly have been true.

BUT IN the journals of opinion and in the daily press there is a strange, begrudging hesitation. This is even more striking when one recalls the hysterical volubility which gripped the liberal world in the first winter of the war. In those days, thousands of words were written and paid for, attacking the Stalinist foreign policies, ridiculing and disavowing the friends of the Soviet Union. All the glittering generals-without-armies, the galaxy of novelists, literary critics, foreign correspondents, and all their kitchen police gathered round to "court-martial" the USSR. They did not come only to indict the Soviet Union; they came to bury it. They came to bury the whole system of Marxist thought and action.

In the *Nation,* for example, the title of Louis Fischer's third article had the tone of triumphant finality: "The Death of a Revolution." In the *New Republic,* the foremost diarist of the summer soldiers, Vincent Sheean, titled his two articles nothing less than "The USSR as a Fascist State." Reinhold Niebuhr laid down a heavy artillery barrage, replete with his usual philosophical boom-booms. By contrast, Ralph Bates and Granville Hicks were more modest: they filled out their applications for "safe conduct" through the war period in single articles. And Lewis Corey brought up the rear with three offensives-in-depth. His articles bore the candid title: "Marxism Reconsidered."

IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE, of course, that the ideological architects of the "Communazi" interpretation of history should find things a little embarrassing these days. And when embarrassed men have any good taste left, they are silent. So it is not accidental that Louis Fischer alone has spoken up, in a recent issue of the *Nation*: Mr. Fischer was never noted for his good taste. Ordinarily, it would not be necessary to linger with Fischer, except that this enables us to delve into a broader review of Soviet foreign policy.

In his powerful speech in the first week of July, Stalin restated the reasons for signing the non-aggression pact; among them, Stalin said, was the fact that the year and a half of the pact gave the Soviet Union time to speed up its defense preparations. The Soviet Union became stronger for that year and a half. But Fischer says no. "I think it is weaker," he argues in the *Nation* of July 10, "because all its potential allies on the continent have meanwhile been crushed by Germany, and today Russia faces Hitler alone." It is weaker, he continues, "because the Soviet Union now has Finland, the Baltic states, and Rumania as bitter enemies whereas in 1939 or 1940 it might have had them as allies or protective buffers."

We can pass over the fact that Louis Fischer believes the USSR is now facing Hitler alone. The crux of the issue is this: were Britain and France really allies of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1939? Or were they "potential allies"? And if their quality as allies was only potential, then why was this potentiality unrealized? The whole question revolves around the reliability of the governments of Chamberlain and Daladier as allies. And on this there is no longer any question. Dorothy Thompson, a close friend of Louis Fischer, has already answered him, and she did so long enough before Fischer wrote his article in the *Nation* to make him look foolish. In the first week of the war, on June 25, Miss Thompson wrote in the New York *Post:* "It is my belief that Hitler was making a tremendous gamble on Britain getting out of the war, as a result of this development [that is, the attack on the USSR—J. S.]. Were the same political brains ruling England that ruled it up until two years ago, exactly that would have happened. The two revolutions and the two bogeys of the Europe and the West would have been encouraged to eat each other up, and Hitler would have emerged in the role of the White Knight saving the world from Bolshevism. . . ."

In this brief observation, when it is reread and thought about, lies the final proof of the reliability, or potentiality, of Britain and France as Soviet allies in the summer of 1939. Miss Thompson is saying now (refuting her own past, of course) that the "political brains" ruling Britain two years ago would have encouraged (what she calls) "the two revolutions and the two bogeys of Europe and the West" to "eat each other up"—in brief, she refutes Fischer's contention that the USSR would have had reliable allies on the continent. She therefore confirms the wisdom of the Soviet Union's reluctance to ally itself with Chamberlain except by the most iron-clad, mutual obligations.

BUT ON THE QUESTION of the Baltic states, Louis Fischer makes himself even more foolish. Not only does he tangle with Dorothy, but with his old friends Lloyd George and Winston Churchill. The USSR is weaker today, he says, because these states might have been allies or protective buffers rather than enemies. But the Anglo-Soviet negotiations in the summer of 1939 revolved precisely around this question: Poland, Finland, and the Baltic states refused to become Soviet allies, or even protective buffers. They insisted that they would not be guaranteed by any outside power. Poland, it is true, accepted a British guarantee but made it worthless by refusing to enlarge that guarantee to include the Soviet Union. Lloyd George ridiculed the Polish guarantee on precisely those grounds. "If we are going in without the help of Russia," he said in the House of Commons April 3, "we shall be walking into a trap. It is the only country whose armies can get there [Poland] and who has got an air force that can match Germany's." . . . "Nor should there be any serious difficulty in guaranteeing the Baltic states and Finland," Winston Churchill wrote on June 7, 1939. "The Russian claim that these should be included in the triple guarantee is well founded. . . . People say: what if they do not wish to be guaranteed? It is certain, however, that if Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were invaded by the Nazis or subverted to the Nazi system by propaganda and intrigue from within, the whole of Europe would be dragged into war. . . . Why then not concert in good time, publicly and courageously, the measures which may render such a fight unnecessary?"

In other words, as Fischer knows quite well, it was because the border states insisted on remaining buffers, and refused to permit an Anglo-Soviet guarantee of their security,

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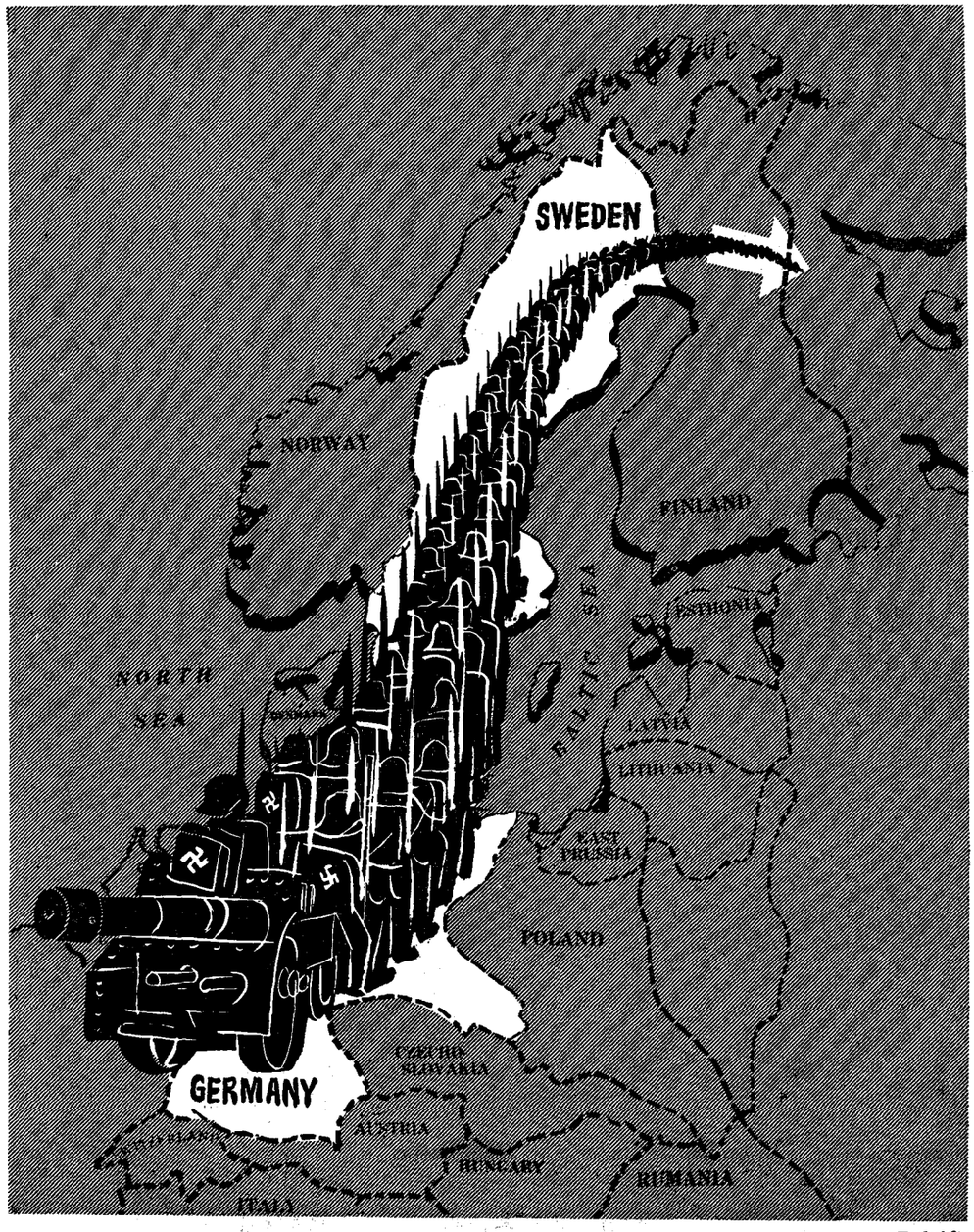
that the negotiations broke down. And it was because Chamberlain and Daladier refused to persuade these states to be guaranteed, and probably stiffened their recalcitrance, that the Anglo-Soviet negotiations were deadlocked. It was not the fault of the Soviets, therefore, that these states retained their precarious position. Nor is it true that peoples of these countries are today enemies, thanks to Soviet policy. In fact, it was Fischer who howled when the USSR forced a measure of its security from Finland. It was Fischer and his friends who yelped and howled when the USSR took over Byelo-Russia and the Galician Ukraine, upon the collapse of the Polish state, when it reoccupied Bessarabia and concluded agreements with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In actual fact, the USSR was doing by itself what it had previously tried to do in harmony with Britain and France. It went about protecting itself and, simultaneously, the peoples of the border regions when all hope of doing so in alliance with Britain and France had disappeared.

BUT let us go a bit deeper. In his speech, to which Fischer takes such exception, Stalin assured the Soviet people that they "shall have loyal allies in the peoples of Europe and America" . . . that their defense would "merge with the struggles of the peoples of Europe and America for their independence, for democratic liberties." To Louis Fischer this remark appeared questionable. It seemed that in its hour of need, the Soviet Union was turning to the peoples of the western world, whereas, in the two years of the non-aggression pact, the USSR had appeared to be maintaining its neutrality irrespective of the tribulations of the West. This misconception gave rise in the winter of 1939 to the charge that the USSR was "betraying" the working class of the western world.

Today, of course, that charge has completely lost its force, as the whole world sees hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens laying down their lives in an heroic resistance to the common enemy of all peoples. This charge has lost its force as millions of people in Britain, all Europe, and our own country see in common struggle with the Soviet Union the only hope of their own independence, and the only hope of a real, lasting peace. This charge has not only lost its force, but the full truth is that it never had the slightest basis in fact. On the contrary, in a subsequent article I think the evidence will prove that even in the period of neutral relations with Hitler Germany, and without violating those relations, the USSR was fundamentally and single-handedly weakening Hitler's power and the influence of his backers. For the purposes of our present discussion, I think it can be shown first, that Soviet policy has always been based on the most sober and serious sense of responsibility toward the working classes and the democratic struggles of other peoples; and second, that in the period after Munich, and in the months just prior to the non-aggression pact, the Soviet Union made *tremendous efforts to create a fighting unity between itself and the peoples of the West, despite the fact that the Social-Democratic leaders of the West were sapping and disintegrating the anti-fascist resistance and unity among these peoples.* It can be shown that the USSR has always striven for a militant alliance between itself and the peoples of the decisive western countries, that in fact it considered German fascism so powerful and universal an enemy that only a fighting alliance between the great powers of the world would suffice to crush it.

The key to Soviet policies, and for that matter the key to an understanding of the whole past decade, is the inter-relation between the policies of the Soviet Union and the democratic struggles of the peoples in Europe, America, and Asia. Our enemies and some of our friends fail to understand this inter-relation: to them, the USSR is either engaged in a world-wide conspiracy against the established social order, or else it is callous to the interests of the rest of the world; to them, non-Russian friends of the Soviet Union are either agents of a foreign power, as J. Edgar Hoover believes; or else they are misguided idealists, sacrificing their own integrity and influence in their own lands to pursue an unrequited affection for the USSR, as for instance, George Soule of the *New Republic* believes.

None of these concepts is true. What is true is this: that the men and women of the Soviet state, while trying to avoid encirclement at the hands of world reaction, have nevertheless at every stage of political development consciously carried out heavy responsibilities in the interests of the democratic struggles of the rest of the world. They have borne our defeats just as they have rejoiced in our successes. And the successes were few. They are dying today, not merely because they have been invaded by the cannibals; they are giving up their life blood, they who might be enjoying the fruits of socialism in plenty, because the



Frederick

Sweden—The Middle Way

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German working class was defeated, because the British people were held back too long from ousting Chamberlain, because the French working classes were demoralized and disorganized by the incompetence and treachery of their leaders.

We need not go too far back. The pattern of events in the three or four years after Hitler's coming to power is relatively clear. Earlier than most of us, the Soviet people recognized the peculiar and dangerous character of German fascism. Its peculiarity rested in the fact that fascism represented much more than the resurgence of German imperialism: it carried the counter-revolutionary, the anti-democratic hopes and ambitions of powerful sections of the British ruling class. Britain and France had spent millions of lives and billions in treasure to assure the defeat of an imperialist rival in the first world war. By the terms of Versailles, they intended to eliminate that rival for generations to come. And in the "normal" course of affairs the imperialist conflicts would have developed between Britain and France, and on a world scale between Britain and the rising power of American capitalism.

Yet how are we to explain the remarkable fact that within eight or nine years of its disaster, German capitalism had rehabilitated itself and within fifteen years was making a bid for European hegemony and world power? That can only be explained by the mortal fear primarily in Britain of the influence of socialism on the colonial peoples, a mortal fear of the association of the German workingmen and the Russian people, which would have opened the path for the advance toward socialism in all Europe. It can only be explained by a desire among powerful British and other imperialists to maintain Germany as the bulwark of a tottering capitalism, to permit the resurgence of German imperialism against everything democratic in Europe on the condition that it proceed against the fortresses of socialism.

The USSR saw that, and its people tightened their belts, speeded up their industrialization and preparedness, while its leaders decided to join the League of Nations and throw their diplomatic weight on the side of peace, on the side of the democratic liberties and independence of European nations.

The peoples of Europe also reorientated themselves after recovering from the shock of the defeat of the German masses. In the armed struggle of the Viennese workingmen, in the uprising of the Asturian miners, in the formation of the Spanish and French people's fronts there was one guiding motif: to break the momentum of the fascist offensive, to prevent the outbreak of war, to advance the democratic aspirations of the common man against the intrigues and pretensions of the neo-medievalists.

It is not accidental that this popular upsurge achieved its clearest expression in Spain and France. For the first stage of Germany's aspirations to continental hegemony required, as *Mein Kampf* indicates, the humbling of France. So also Italy's Mediterranean ambitions developed at the expense of France. The fascist intervention in Spain and preparations for the rape of Czechoslovakia were directed not only against the democratic achievements and example of the Spanish and Czech people: they were intended to encircle France, to break the alliance between France and the Soviet Union, the fulcrum of European peace. And the British Munich eers cooperated not only because they were interested in reducing the power of France in its imperialist sense but because France of the middle thirties most clearly expressed the democratic heights to which the peoples of all Europe aspired.

Whereas for three years this virtual coalition of democratic forces in alliance with the Soviet Union staved off the fascists, by October 1938, at Munich, the floodgates had been opened, and the alliance between the USSR and the peoples of the West had virtually been nullified. This aspect of Munich has never been sufficiently appreciated. It has never been sufficiently realized to what a level the peoples of Europe were reduced after Munich. After all, what was left of the unity between the western working class and the Soviet Union? After Munich the Czechoslovaks were gone; the French People's Front disintegrated so rapidly that by the end of November the Radical Socialist leadership was breaking the general strike of the French Confederation of Labor; a few weeks before the rape of Prague Franco's armies were reaching Barcelona, and the valiant fight of the Spanish people was over (betrayed but never conquered); in Britain itself, the fatuous leaders of the Labor Party were expelling D. N. Pritt and Stafford Cripps for demanding a People's Front—and there was the USSR alone, more dangerously isolated from European affairs than ever before. Things were so critical that significantly enough, after Munich the USSR insisted that only full-fledged military agreements among the great powers could hold the fascists. Whereas in the years previous it was still possible for Litvinov to appeal at Geneva that the powers abide by the League of Nations Covenant, after Munich things had come to such a pass that only the most serious, drastic, far-reaching measures could prevent another Munich or a general war.

But—and here is the whole point—after Munich the Soviet leaders realized, in common with men like Earl Browder, R. Palme Dutt—or from another point of view, Winston Churchill—that the fascists were changing their orientation from east to west. Browder's estimate of Munich is well known, recalled by A. B. Magil in NEW MASSES, August 5. Winston Churchill called it a "total unmitigated defeat." In a cable to this magazine in its first issue after Munich, R. Palme Dutt wrote in a vein that is truly Biblical for its terrible prophecy:

> Chamberlain may dream that Hitler will turn the power which British capitulation has surrendered into his hands against the Soviet Union, and spare Britain. Such an attempt is not excluded, but it is by no means the greatest likelihood that Hitler should necessarily direct his attack first against the strongest state in the world, the one state that has stood firm and not trembled before fascism. There are three other directions in which Hitler may first turn his line of attack. The first and most obvious line of advance is to follow up the reduction of Czechoslovakia . . . the second line of attack is against France . . . [developing] initially as the assault of French reaction in the service of Hitler against French democracy, with the aim to turn France into a vassal tied to Hitler . . . and the third line coming more and more into the open . . . is the deep and basic conflict with Britain for the possession of the spoils of the empire. . . . Chamberlain's laurel crown of victory is already withering on his brow and will yet turn into his crown of thorns.

In the French Yellow Book, the collection of diplomatic papers which throws most light on post-Munich affairs, confirmations that the fascists were turning against the west appear as early as December 1938. And on March 10, 1939, four days before the final ignominy in Prague, Joseph Stalin told the Eighteenth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party:

> . . . Certain European and American politicians and journalists having lost patience waiting for the "march on the Soviet Ukraine" are themselves beginning to disclose what is really behind the policy of non-intervention. They are saying quite openly, putting it down in black and white, that the Germans have cruelly "disappointed" them, for instead of marching further east, against the Soviet Union, they have turned, you see, to the west, and are demanding colonies. One might think that the districts of Czechoslovakia were yielded to Germany as the price of an undertaking to launch war on the Soviet Union, but that now the Germans are refusing to pay their bills and are sending them to Hades.

Now, what does this all mean? It means that as early as March the Soviet leaders realized that *if it were a question only of their own security, they could probably safeguard it by normalizing their relations with Germany*. They could have negotiated the non-aggression pact in the early spring. Yet it is a striking and crucial fact, which utterly destroys the myth of "betraying the West" that despite the ebb-tide in the European anti-fascist movements, the Soviet leaders spent five months trying to bring about a coalition between themselves, Britain, and France to halt fascism. If necessary they were prepared to war against it. Evidently they were deeply concerned with the fate of the peoples of the West, and they knew what was happening in France a full year before the rest of us. Evidently they saw in the anti-fascist alliance the most logical and most effective barrier to a general war. And it was only when that alliance proved impossible, in the

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eleventh hour, that the Soviet people decided to approach the problem of dealing with Hitler, and his backers in London, from the other angle: they took the hard and difficult alternative of curbing Hitler and smashing Chamberlain by themselves—waiting until the wheel of history had turned and it might once again become possible to reestablish a fighting unity with the West against the common enemy.

In his uneven but valuable volume *Night Over Europe,* Frederick L. Schuman, the leading American historian on European affairs, develops the corroborative evidence. Schuman puts the alternatives which confronted the Soviet leadership as follows: first, the possibility of a united capitalist attack; second, the possibility of a Nazi attack on the USSR condoned by Britain and France; third, "a bloc of the western powers and the Soviet Union against the Reich to prevent any further aggression, or to insure German defeat if it were attempted"; Fourth, a German attack on Poland, opening into a war with France and Britain in which the USSR remained neutral.

The first possibility, says Schuman, "no longer required serious consideration," since the depth of antagonisms among the great powers precluded a united attack on socialism. *"That the last possibility finally materialized does not prove that it was from the outset envisaged as the most desirable one by the Kremlin."* (Italics mine—JS.) Schuman continues, with a rigorous logic that shames Louis Fischer and all the rest of his friends:

> Germany could be checkmated and if not deterred from aggression, then defeated, only by the realization of the third possibility [that is, a coalition against the aggressor]. *"This was therefore the alternative sincerely preferred by the men of Moscow,* not because they said so, but because their purposes both as defenders of the Socialist Fatherland, and as international revolutionists (Schuman's phrase) could best be served thereby.
>
> If they did not accept forthwith the Allied suggestions, it was because of continued fear of the second possibility [a Nazi attack condoned by Chamberlain and Daladier—J. S.] induced by the peculiar character of the Allied proposals and enhanced by the new gestures of appeasement in the West. Stalin and Molotov moreover were no longer begging the Allies for support against the Reich. They had no need to. The fourth possibility was always open if the third failed.

I think we have now assembled the evidence, in some sort of perspective, which wholly refutes the criticism of Soviet policies just prior to the non-aggression pact. And the evidence is, that so far from ignoring the problems of the peoples of the West, the USSR risked a Nazi attack condoned by Chamberlain and Daladier, which these gentlemen tried to make possible up to, and even after the outbreak of war over Poland. It was a risk which becomes even more understandable in the light of the present struggle against Hitler, and establishes a historical continuity between the present and past. It was a risk that is explicable only on the premise that *from the very outset the Soviet people were keenly aware of the relationship between their own security and that of the smaller nations of Europe and the peoples of the decisive western lands.* They were willing to stake that security in the interests of genuine unity against the common enemy, just as today the security of all of us rests on genuine unity with them.

Michaels

"Listen to this, Baron."

In a succeeding article it will be worth tracing the details of the Soviet Union's relationship with Germany in the past two years, reconsidering the non-aggression pact, what it did and did not do. In a final piece, it will be worth reexamining, in the context of this background, some of the attitudes and problems of American policy.

JOSEPH STAROBIN.

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NAZI MILITARY FABLES

Colonel T. comments on Hitler's fairy tale of the forty-fifth night. RAF double. Statistics on losses in two wars. A line that never existed.

BESIDES the fact that on the fiftieth day of the war the Germans had not attained a single strategic objective and could claim but one seventy-five-mile advance during the seventh week (in the triangle Vinnitza-Belaya Tserkov-Uman), the news from the front affords us several startling revelations.

First, we learn that the Soviet Air Force has bombed Berlin repeatedly. We will not attempt to claim that such raids have great *direct* military value. We did not concede any military importance to the German raids on Moscow and we do not wish to overestimate the military importance of the Soviet raids on Berlin. However, they have great moral value.

Let us look at these raids from another angle. A rather arbitrary but fairly correct division between the "Eastern" and "Western" fronts would be the fifteenth degree longitude East, i.e., approximately through Vienna. Berlin is just west of this dividing line and heretofore has been the stamping ground of the RAF. But now another "RAF" (Red Air Force) has entered the zone, thus clasping hands with its flying ally over the Brandenburger Tor; and somewhere way north along the same longitude two other "namesakes"—the RN's (Royal Navy and Red Navy)—have clasped hands over the hump of Norway and are keeping clear the sea lane from Iceland to Murmansk.

The Red Air Force's has been no mean achievement, especially in the light of its previous and repeated "destruction" by the Germans. It is natural that the big bombers used were not based near the front lines. It is therefore safe to assume that they came from either Leningrad, Moscow, or Kiev, which means round trips of 1,800—2,000—1,600 miles without taking "cruising" into account. This achievement shows that the Soviet Air Force is materially and morally able to undertake long-range operations—a fact which scotches the Lindbergh dogma. It places every single part of Germany "on the spot," a very terrifying fact for the Germans. Most of Germany is under a double air threat.

Furthermore, this proves that the Soviet High Command feels that it can afford to divert part of its air force from the immediate battlefields. And finally, the fact that the Nazi air-raid defense failed to open fire during the first Soviet raid on Berlin, seems to indicate that the German, and *not* the Soviet High Command, isn't quite aware of the potentialities of the forces opposing it. The Soviet raids, irrespective of whether they hit military objectives or not, must have badly hit German morale which twelve hours before had been bolstered by Hitler's Scheherazade tales of the forty-fifth night.

And now as to these tales. H. V. Kaltenborn, despite his usual radio vagaries, justly said that the German General Staff must have gasped when it read its own communiques of August 6 and 8. Any military man would have gasped at their enormity.

What did they say, besides hollow things about field marshals, second-rate places, and principles of "unconditional truth"? The only concrete things in those communiques were a few figures. But what figures! The Red Army, according to the Germans, lost 895,000 prisoners, 13,145 tanks, 10,388 guns, and 9,082 planes. It was also claimed that the Red Army had lost 3,000,000 men, killed.

TO BEGIN WITH, the very explicitness of the figures on *materiel* losses gives away their spuriousness. The increase of these figures between July 1 and August 6 (tanks from 7,615 to 13,145; guns from 4,423 to 10,388; planes from 6,233 to 9,082) gives the lie to the first "victory" communique which claimed in fact that the Red Army did not have "anything to fight with" any more.

And now we come to the figures on human losses. In order to evaluate them properly, we must turn to the statistics of the first world war. Although the weapons nowadays are different, it may be said that this change has hardly affected, for instance, the average ratio between the dead and wounded. True, the ratio between dead and wounded tank drivers and fliers is greater than the ratio between dead and wounded infantrymen, but the very number of tank troops and fliers is comparatively small and their heightened mortality cannot much affect the total numbers. It may also be said that casualties from air bombs are smaller than those caused by artillery, because a shell gives hardly any warning except a gurgling sound lasting but a few seconds, while one sees and hears a plane long before the bombs start to fall. We may, therefore, safely assume that the ratio for casualties in this war is approximately the same as in the first world war. The Soviet figures on the Finnish war, for example, show the ratio to have been 1:3 between dead and wounded.

Clinton

Here are a few figures on the war of 1914-18:

Comparative Losses of Russian, French, and German Armies
(In Thousands)

	Mobilized:	Killed:	Wounded:	Percentage of casualties:
Russia	15,500	1,300	3,850	35.5
France	8,300	900	2,750	47.0
Germany	11,000	1,500	4,247	55.0

(Those who died of wounds are not included in the items "killed" or "wounded," but are included in the percentage of casualties.)

Thus the average ratio between killed and wounded for all three major armies is 1:3 (approximately). Applying this ratio to the figures announced by the Germans, we find that according to Hitler's propaganda the Red Army must have lost some 9,000,000 men in wounded. Adding to this 3,000,000 "dead" and 1,000,000 "prisoners," the Soviet armies must have lost 13,000,000 men in forty-five days, or a division every eighty-five minutes. The German figures when analyzed reduce themselves to this absurdity.

Nor does the number of prisoners claimed by the Germans quite click with their boasts of huge "encirclements." In the four summer and three winter campaigns on the Eastern Front during the first world war, the Russians lost 5,500,000 men—killed, wounded, and those who died of wounds. Russian prisoners taken by the armies of the Central Powers amounted to about 2,400,000 men or thirty-one percent of the total casualties. In this connection it must be remembered that in that war there were few large-scale encirclements and capitulations besides the Battle of Tannenberg. The Germans, claiming that they have been "encircling" Soviet troops and forcing them to capitulate all the way from Bialystok to Uman, boast of only 1,000,000 prisoners out of 13,000,000 casualties, i.e. less than eight percent (as compared to thirty-one percent during the first world war). This is another totally absurd figure.

As against these lunatic vagaries we have the perfectly plausible figures of the Soviet

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High Command, which claims that the attacker lost 1,500,000 men as against the defender's loss of 750,000, which is above the normal ratio. No separate figures are given for killed, wounded, and prisoners, but Americans returning from Rumania affirm that the Rumanian army lost something like 40,000 killed and 120,000 wounded, which makes sense and falls within the normal average outlined above. If the Rumanian Army lost 170,000 men while doing practically nothing, it is conservative to assume that the German Army, fighting continuously, has lost 1,500,000 men.

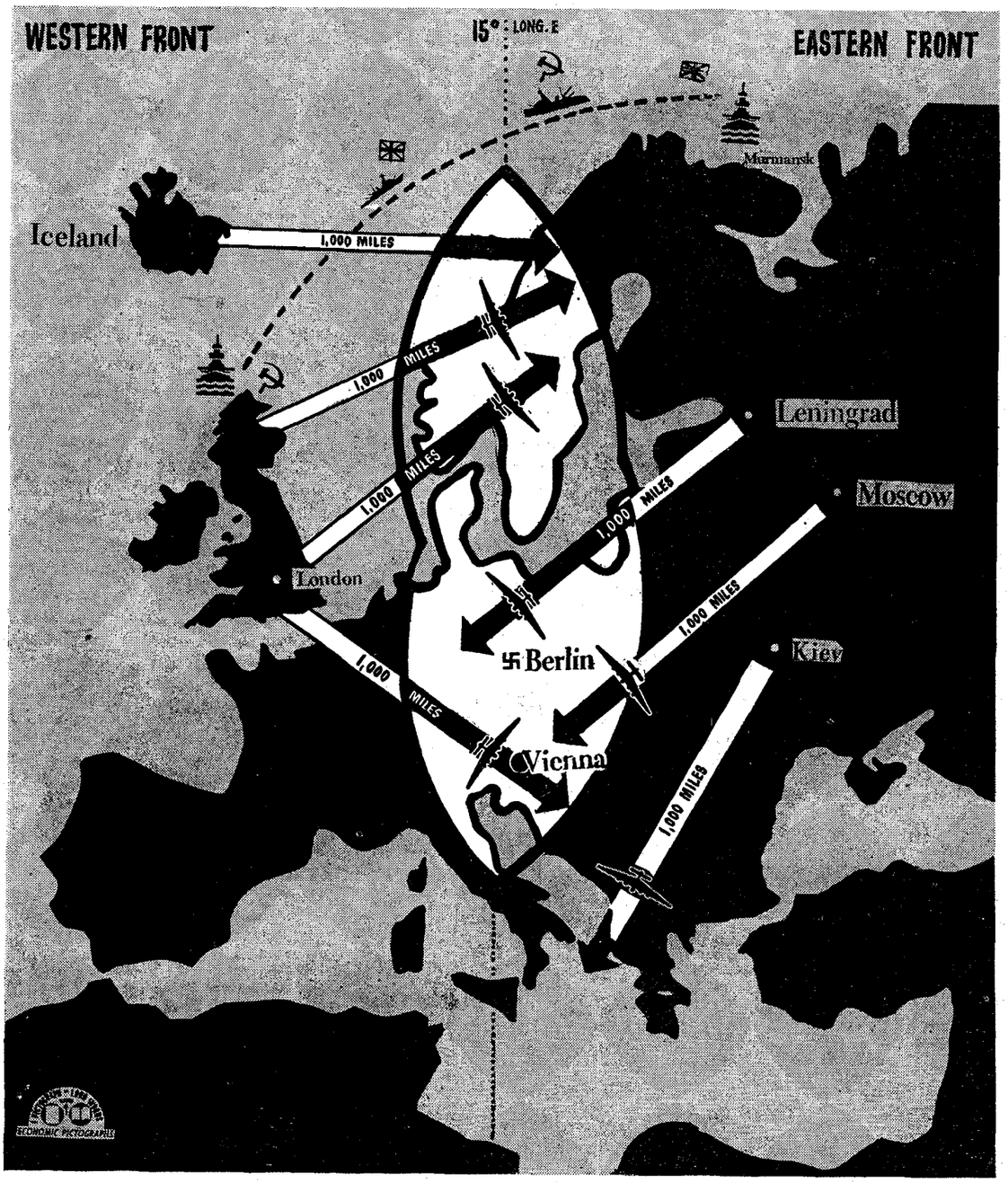
ANOTHER DISCOVERY made during this last week is a fact that we never doubted: *that there never was a Stalin line.* This "Line," as far as the Germans are concerned, had a "two-in-one" purpose. Whenever an advance was scored by the German Army, it could be enhanced by the additional claim of having "cracked" the Stalin Line. Whenever the Nazi armies were delayed, one could blame the "powerful Stalin Line."

The "discovery" of the non-existence of the alleged "Stalin Line" has a number of important military implications. If the "Line" were where the newspaper maps placed it, the Germans would have cracked it in all three principal directions, i.e., in the region of Kholm in the Leningrad direction, in the region of Smolensk in the Moscow direction, and on the Belaya-Tserkov-Uman sector in the Ukraine. In such a case it would have been natural for them immediately to step up their tempo to a great degree and to rush straight at the three capitals without bothering to wheel right as they did—particularly in the light of the fact that between the three regions named above and the respective capitals, there are absolutely no important natural defensive obstacles.

What then stopped the Germans and forced them to move sidewise like a crab? The reason is that beyond the outer, western fringe of the fortified zone, they found instead of a "hedge" a great "forest," i.e., a whole country studded with strong points of various types and sizes. The torrent of the invasion, which had already reached the fringes slowed down almost to torpidity, could not rush forward —because *it had not broken through anything.* Instead it was *sponged up by something.* It still moves forward in places. In others it is being sucked in. In others it has dried up.

In short, the developments of the last week have established three facts of major importance: (1) that there is contact in the air and on the sea between the two RAF's and the two RN's, (2) that the "Stalin Line" never existed and, therefore, could not be broken and, (3) that the Germans have reached a point where they have to lie in a stupid and—from a military point of view—unprofessional way.

COLONEL T.



HANDS ACROSS EUROPE

The Area of Double Threat

In the House of Commons last week, Clement Attlee hinted strongly at Anglo-Soviet naval cooperation in the Arctic, while the first Soviet air raids over Berlin indicated prior arrangements for cooperation between the Royal and the Red Air Forces. Here's a visual representation of how eastern and western Germany may have been plotted out on the map for joint operations by the British and Soviet air commands. Taking a 1,000-mile radius from the major Soviet cities, it would be possible for Soviet bombing planes to travel well into middle Germany. Taking the same radius from the major British jumping-off places, including Iceland, you get a sense of how much the Royal Air Force could cover. And where the arcs intersect, you get the area of "double threat."

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GESTAPO ON THE POTOMAC

The capital's police with the help of some congressional Simon Legrees go in for Negro baiting. Reviving the strong-arm squads. Investigations that get nowhere.

WASHINGTON'S police department is used to congressional probes. Every few years they take place. Some have been whitewash jobs, plenty have resulted in mud-slinging, and most of them have been publicity plugs for congressmen who pray to the ballot box that the folks back home will think their representatives are cleaning up the capital. But not for many years have Washington's voteless citizens seen the likes of the police investigation by the House that ended July 11 after two weeks of scorching testimony. Witnesses told of policemen spying on fellow officers and tapping each other's telephones. Examples were given of shameful inefficiency and demoralization in the detective bureau. But the sensational features of the probe were less important than the fact —plain to all progressives—that the investigators and police had joined in an unholy alliance with a common purpose: to stir up race hatred by blaming the city's crime situation on the Negroes. The result might well be a return to the days of police "strong-arm squads" with bloody drives on both Negroes and "radicals."

The congressional probe began soon after the discovery on June 16 that Jessie Elizabeth Streiff, twenty-three-year-old War Department clerk, had been raped and strangled. The police haven't discovered the murderer yet. In fact they haven't solved a number of Washington's recent murder mysteries. The Streiff slaying fired public sentiment to a degree of heat that was felt in Congress. Washington's supposed governing body, the Board of Commissioners, had already scheduled an investigation of the police department, but chances were that the inquiry would be tame stuff. So Congress set up an investigating sub-committee of its own, chairmanned by William T. Schulte of Indiana. One of its members was Rep. F. Edward Hebert of Louisiana, a leading Negro-baiter. Even before the inquiry started, it was apparent from the talk of committee members that the investigation would be used to whip up sentiment against Negroes and "subversives."

Once the probe got under way, the purpose became quite clear. Typical of the committee's general line of questioning was the following:

REPRESENTATIVE COPELAND (Nebraska): Are most of the colored race here gainfully employed?

POLICEMAN CALLAHAN (captain of one of the downtown precincts): They are.

COPELAND: Do they belong to labor organizations?

CALLAHAN: Most of them.

COPELAND: This pressure to bring them here could then come from the CIO, the AFL, and the Communists?

CALLAHAN: The Communists have done considerable work among them.

Most of the testimony by police officials on what they thought about Negroes, Communists, and "pressure groups"—i.e., organizations like the National Negro Congress—was "off the record." However, news of the unholy alliance got around. With several days of the investigation still scheduled, a Negro girl reporter from the Baltimore *Afro-American,* Negro weekly, came into the committee room. Near the close of that day's hearing, Representative Hebert noticed her presence. He and other committee members held a quick, whispered conference, and it was decided to recess for the day. On the following day a secretary announced in a low tone to the sub-committee that the *Afro-American* reporter wanted to get in again. Again there was a whispered conference and Representative Hebert said he would leave the room if the girl were allowed in. But some of the representatives had a different problem: they had to remember the Negro voters in their districts.

Someone then thought of demanding a House press-gallery card from the Negro reporter. Negroes just don't get cards to the press gallery, and besides the *Afro-American* is a weekly—only reporters for daily papers get cards. But a consultation with other reporters present revealed that assistants of reporters covering the hearing for two of Washington's leading newspapers also did not have press-gallery passes. However, the *Afro-American* reporter was quietly told, outside the committee room, that a pass was needed for admission. None of the Washington papers printed this story. Nor did they tell the real reason why the committee abruptly ended its investigation on July 11, several days ahead of schedule. The "affair of the *Afro*" was too much for the congressmen. They themselves had become frightened at the extent to which they had gone to make the Negroes the scapegoat in the congressional game of "What's Wrong with Washington?"

Only a few years ago, the usual practice of the Washington police was to beat their prisoners, with particular sadism toward Negroes. Investigations and protests by progressive organizations put an end to the open beatings and to the "strong-arm squads" which gleefully swept through the city picking up "suspects"—mostly Negroes—from private homes or pool halls, and then beating them. Plenty of brutality is still indulged in by the capital police, but the most flagrant practices were ended by the progressive campaigns. If the Schulte sub-committee has its way, however, the "good old days" will return.

Detective Sergeant Joseph Shimon, on the witness stand, made it clear that he wanted to resume his earlier activities in dealing with "suspects." When Representative Schulte asked him, "Do you feel such a strong-arm squad is needed in the situation facing Washington now?", Shimon replied: "Yes, but I wouldn't call it a strong-arm squad, but a roving squad of good effective men to clean things up." Schulte then asked: "Why shouldn't we recreate this roving squad . . . and keep the undesirable elements on the move? No responsible citizen would complain, only the people with ulterior motives." Shimon agreed again. If such a squad were established, he informed the investigators, "within thirty days the commissioners will be beating off every Communist group in town." It is well to remember that a "Communist" to Shimon means any progressive who objects to the beating of Negroes.

But for all the agreement among the police that a little beating of prisoners is a fine thing, the department hardly presented a picture of all for one and one for all. Actually, testimony brought out that the department contained a "Gestapo" to spy on the other members of the force. The telephones of fellow officers were tapped, by order of the chief. And the main duty of the spy group was to track down so-called subversive elements. The FBI, the State Department, and the Dies committee offered full support. This witch hunting succeeded in terrorizing individual policemen and demoralizing the entire department. Recently retirements have opened up many vacancies in the police command. The race for these jobs is a free-for-all—and to get them, an aspirant libels his competitor.

Captain Callahan, who was graduated from the FBI police school, told the committee that the department suffered from four main evils: (1) its "Gestapo"; (2) the illiteracy of superiors, whose crude grammar and lack of professional qualifications impair efficiency; (3) the system of selling tickets for police benefits which amounts to "rather thinly veiled extortion"; (4) the individual's ties to certain religious and fraternal bodies—ties so strong that promotions are usually made according to the wishes of outside groups.

All in all, Washingtonians were treated to the sorry farce of a congressional investigation which only confirmed their worst fears about the "guardians of the public." And Washingtonians have no illusion that anything will be done about it. The recommendations which will be made will probably read well but mean very little. So long as Washington citizens can't vote, can't choose their own representatives—so long, in other words, as they are excluded from the workings of democracy—they have little hope of correcting abuses. The most they can expect is another investigation in a year or so.

PAUL ROBERTS.

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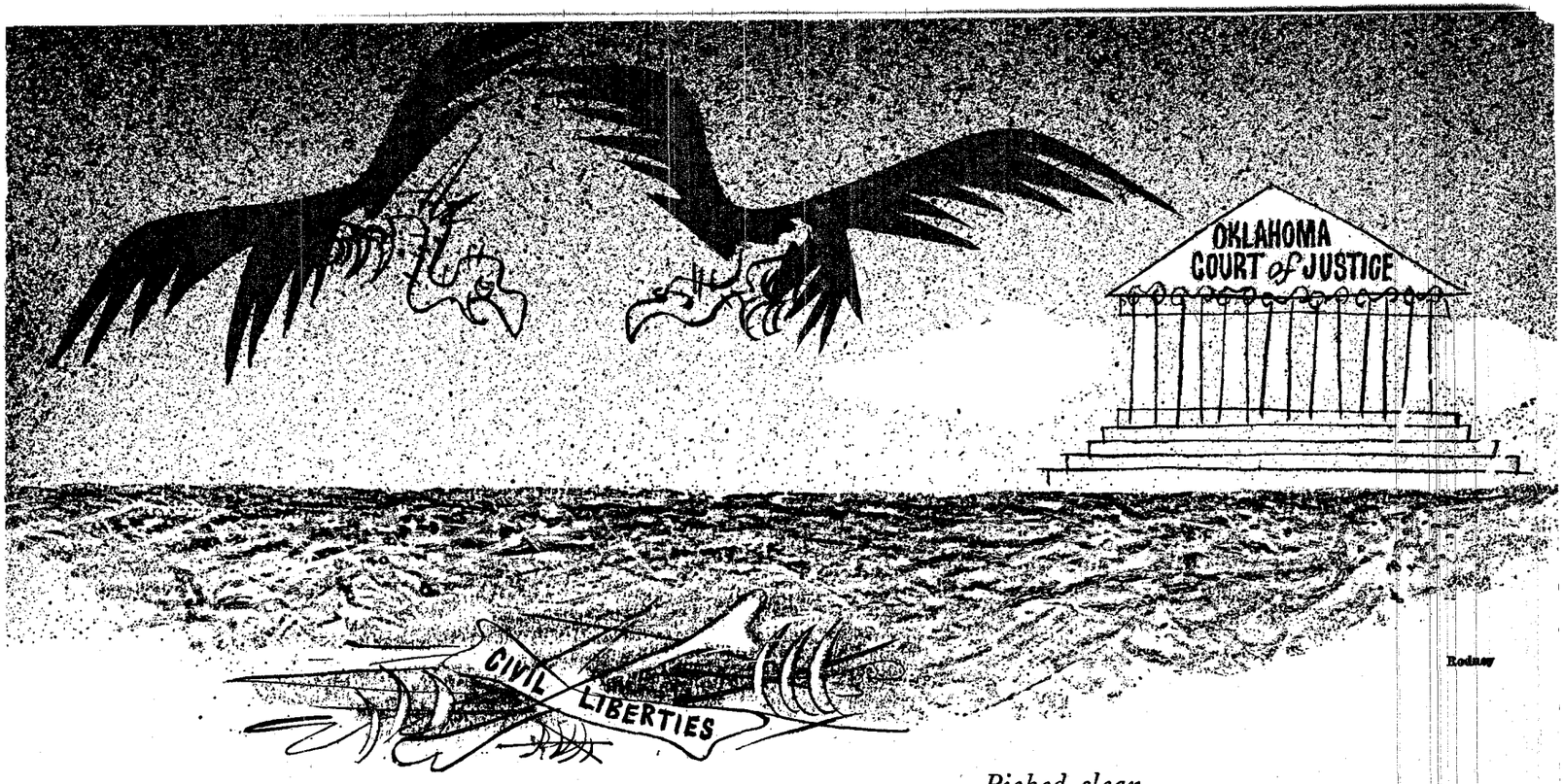

Picked clean

OKLAHOMA ORDEAL

"What was happening in Oklahoma to my people was enough to break one's heart." The "mystery woman" of the trials tells her story. Ten years in the penitentiary for selling books.

IT WAS on Aug. 17, 1940, that the raids took place in Oklahoma County. Houses were searched and ransacked. A score of people vanished from the streets. Books and private papers were seized and locked up in the county jail. Later a dozen men and women were brought to court, the men manacled together, and charged with criminal syndicalism. Bail was set at $50,000 to $100,000 for each person.

Since then a year has passed. Month after month the trials drag through the Oklahoma County Court. Last October Robert Wood, then state secretary of the Communist Party, was sentenced to ten years in prison and fined $5,000 for the crime of *selling books*. A month later Alan Shaw, who spent his twenty-second birthday in the county jail, received the same outrageous sentence for membership in the Communist Party. In April it was Eli Jaffe, former state organizer of the Workers Alliance. And in June the same ten years, $5,000 fine were handed out to Ina Wood, the wife of Robert Wood.

During the last few weeks a national protest has arisen over these prosecutions which have sentenced young men and women to the penitentiary for longer terms than are served by the average Oklahoma murderer. But County Atty. Lewis R. Morris, who intends to run for governor next year on the basis of his anti-Communist successes, and the fanatically anti-Communist Asst. County Atty. John Eberle have announced that the trials will continue when the court reopens on September 9. Eight people remain to be tried. The next to come up, they say, will be Elizabeth Green, social worker from New York.

I AM the "mystery woman" of the Oklahoma trials. Of course, the mystery is of the Hearst Sunday supplement type, completely manufactured.

At the hearing on the bonds, Prosecutor Eberle waved a passport before the judge to show that I was ready to "skip the country at any moment." The passport was unused and had expired.

Through every trial Eberle has flaunted my almost exhausted bank account. He hints at God knows what mysterious connection with Moscow and the Comintern. But Eberle likewise has in his possession my birth certificate which clearly says that I was born in Minnesota, and my income tax returns, showing that I receive a regular income from the estate of my mother who died in December 1936 and that of my grandfather who died in March 1939.

This mystery woman fabrication makes a wonderful yarn which strikes me as very funny.

One of my grandfathers was living with his parents in Missouri before the Civil War. My other grandfather settled in Minnesota in 1873. My people farmed and tailored and taught school and preached in the churches of the Middle West for decades before Oklahoma was opened for settlers. My mother's father was very fond of farming but he liked an eight-hour day. He often told me how at the age of sixteen he left the long hours and poor returns of farm life and went out as a drummer for sewing machines in the country west of the Mississippi. He always had a way with women when I knew him, and he must have had it even then, for a few years later he was able to open up a drygoods store in a little town in eastern Missouri. Here my mother was born, baptized, and married, and here today she lies in the cemetery.

My father was brought up on a farm in Minnesota. He tells today how he used to walk six miles to school through the snow in the bitter cold. He had shoes but not socks, a suit of clothes but no coat. His people had come from Bohemia, the country later known as Czechoslovakia, which at that time was suffering under the yoke of the Austrian emperor, as it suffers today under the rule of Hitler. My Czech grandparents died before I was old enough to remember anything about them. But I know many stories about my grandfather. When he was a little boy the village priest wanted him to study for the priesthood but he took more to the village tailor who told him wonderful stories. So my grandfather became a tailor instead of a priest. After he came to this country he worked for a while in a trunk factory in Wisconsin and it was there, I believe, that my father was born. Then he bought a farm in Minnesota. Later, as the boys were growing up, the State of Minnesota established a university. Grandfather Z. moved into the city and opened up a tailor shop so that his sons could have an education.

My family was part of the Middle West,

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growing up with it. They prospered with its expansion. They had no ambition to be millionaires. When my grandfather in Missouri thought he had enough money to last him the rest of his life, he sold his store, retired, then went back to farming on an eight-hour day. My father became a teacher in a university and later a well known scientist. The Middle West of the nineteenth century offered to my people all that they wanted—comfortable homes and a chance to make a living at a congenial occupation. That is all, I think, that most people want out of life.

FOR SOME YEARS I had been a social worker in New York City, when I decided to move to Oklahoma. That was in February 1940. I knew that all was not as it had been in the Southwest when I was there many years ago. My cousin Otie had lost his farm through foreclosure despite all the money my grandfather had sent him, and despite the fact that he was known to be a hard-working farmer with a fine farm. My grandfather's farm wasn't bringing in any money at all. The town where he had lived for nearly half a century had dwindled in population. It was a farm town. Business depended on the farmers, and apparently the farmers no longer had any money.

And I knew, too, that Oklahomans had never had it easy. My grandfather has told me how, a few years after Oklahoma was opened for settlers, streams of homesteaders had been driven out by repeated droughts and grasshopper plagues; they fled from starvation and went back east through Missouri, selling their claims for anything that they could get for them. But that had been a long time ago. Oklahoma had good land and rich land, and there was a time when Oklahomans enjoyed more comfortable years.

I love Oklahoma. The land stretches away endlessly with a gentle roll. And the people of Oklahoma are like my people—quiet, slow-speaking folk who go to church on Sunday and make friends with whoever comes along. No matter how long a Westerner lives in the East, he is always a stranger. When you get back to the West, you know you've reached home.

But what was happening in Oklahoma to my people was enough to break one's heart. The men and women who had gone to Oklahoma to farm its soil were living on dump heaps in shacks made of wooden boxes and on whatever could be dug out of the garbage. They had seen their land rise up in the wind and blow away. The mortgage companies and the insurance companies and the big landlords had their farms, and the tractors had driven them off the land and nobody offered them a job selling sewing machines or anything else. One farmer out of every six was driven off his land in Oklahoma between 1935 and 1940.

But land is not the only thing that Oklahoma has to offer as a means of livelihood. They say there is enough coal in Oklahoma to last the entire United States for at least 200 years. And there is oil aplenty. The derricks out in the open country rise like a new kind of forest. In Oklahoma City, they cover the entire east side of the town. Millions of barrels of oil have been shipped out of the state. But the miners, who are the oldest settlers—they came with the railroads long before Oklahoma territory was opened to homesteaders—are almost always unemployed. And the oil millions flow into the pockets of a few, while the industry gives employment to only about 35,000 of Oklahoma's workers.

When I reached Oklahoma one person out of every ten able to work was unemployed. What I saw meant this to me: that the West, which had brought opportunity to my family and to me and to many others, now brought starvation and disappointment. Not only were people denied the opportunity to work but, in a land with plenty for all, food was refused them. These people were my people. And just as my grandfather tried to help my cousins through the long years of farm hardship, it seemed to me that I must do what I could to see that the people of Oklahoma got something like half a chance in America.

Was I to divide up what little money I had? But that would have amounted to only a few cents for each and would have helped nobody. Besides, that is charity—not the kind of which the Bible speaks, but the kind of which the Rockefellers speak. What my people in Oklahoma needed was not charity but things to which they had a right. So I did what seemed right for me to do, as an American and as a granddaughter of pioneers. It landed me in the Oklahoma County jail and today I face trial on charges of "criminal syndicalism" and advocating the overthrow of those American principles which I was trying to defend.

IT MAY BE I who will go on trial in September. Or the County Attorney may change his mind. It may be Herbert Brausch, or Goldie Brausch, or C. A. Lewis, or the old farmer

Elizabeth Green

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Mrs. C. A. Lewis, one of the defendants who faces a ten-year sentence

whom I have never to this day laid eyes on, or the young fellow from New York who was visiting relatives for a few days.

Herbert Brausch was one of the founders of Local 602 of the Hodcarriers Union, AFL, in Oklahoma City. Before that when there was more work in the oil fields, he belonged to the Oil Workers Union, and before that to the Union of Hoisting Engineers. Way back he was an organizer for the Farm Labor Union, AFL, till the Ku Kluxers kidnapped him and deported him to Kansas. He is a big tall man with blue eyes and sandy hair, and he knows the Bible almost by heart. When the terror began he was living with his wife Goldie and his six children in a two-room shack out in the oil fields. Of course, there was no light or water. But people living in those parts used to pipe in on the companies' gas lines and at least there was heat. The eldest child was ten years old then, and a great help to her mother, caring for the younger children and assisting with the family wash. Herb got work when there was any, but about the last steady job that had come his way was building the county jail and courthouse back in 1935. This is a very beautiful building with a quotation from Jefferson on the front. Herb has a great deal of pride in the building. He explains how this and that was done. And it was on the eighth floor that Herb was locked up for so many months; it is on the sixth floor that he will face trial in September or later.

Herb and Goldie are good friends of mine. Goldie told me how the County Relief Investigator searched their house because the deputy sheriffs didn't have a search warrant when they paid their call, and how she insisted in vain that she never kept food in her bureau drawers. We don't know what all was found to hand over to the County Attorney, but we do know that one thing was Herb's union book.

Goldie was brought up in the country where many Indians live, and she tells how they made a pet of her when she was a little girl. When Goldie gets angry it's something like a thunderstorm. So when Goldie heard that they'd put Herb in jail for buying a *Daily Worker* she rushed to town ready to beat that jail down with her two fists. She came back discouraged. "You'll never get anybody out of there," she said, which Herb thinks is a great tribute to his handiwork. Herb is a good worker and knows it and likes it. And he is a good union man. He was for years his local's delegate to the Central Trades and Labor Council. The union paid his dues to the international while he was in jail.

Also charged with "criminal syndicalism" is C. A. Lewis. He and his wife have a little homestead out on the edge of town. There they keep a cow and raise rabbits and chickens for a living, while Mr. Lewis gets what jobs he can about town. Mr. Lewis says his mother was fairly well acquainted with Abraham Lincoln when they lived in Illinois, but the Lewises kept on moving westward. Mr. Lewis remembers traveling with his family in a covered wagon when he was about six years old. As for Mrs. Lewis, she was born in Oklahoma when it was still a territory, and there's not much she doesn't know about her state. She was a schoolteacher before her marriage.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis have two children—Orval, who is now eighteen, and Wilma, who is sixteen. When the marauders of last August 17 carted off Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, they took along young Orval and put him in jail, too. Wilma they left on the street corner.

Wilma is about five feet high. She has brown eyes and goes to high school. You don't know what you're missing if you don't know Wilma Lewis. As I say, Wilma was left on the street corner. Now, the men who carried off her family wouldn't tell her who they were or where they were taking her folks, but Wilma had a pretty good idea. And she didn't know what to do, so she went looking for someone who would, and the someone she looked for was Robert Wood who had already been taken away to the county jail.

Here is what Wilma wrote about the incident in a letter to the International Labor Defense:

> I walked up onto Robert Wood's porch and a man came to the door and ordered me to come in. I hesitated and he opened the screen door and grabbed my arm. Later I learned that his name was Wagoner. He gave me the impression that he wanted to act tough but hadn't had much experience. For the next three hours I was questioned by at least a dozen different men who came and went during the time and lied to me in every conceivable manner. One thing I will never forget was the statement by one of the officers that "We don't care anything about the constitution. We make our own laws."
>
> The most amusing experience was when I was left with Wagoner to watch me. I was lying down resting. All the time the others were gone, Wagoner sat in a chair not three feet away with his hand on his gun and never took his eyes off me. . . . As I lay there I was just wondering whether he thought I was going to knock him out!

Wilma tells how she finally began to cry and said she had to milk the cow, and they let her go.

These and people like these are facing ten years in an Oklahoma penitentiary. The International Labor Defense is defending us. It has seen to it that Robert Wood and Alan Shaw and Eli Jaffe and Ina Wood had lawyers and it supplied the bond to keep them out of prison while appeals on their cases are pending.

Here is what the *Christian Evangelist,* national weekly of the Disciples of Christ, wrote on the conviction of Ina Wood: "And what shall the church say about the violation of civil liberties for those who are, politically or religiously, in the minority? A young woman is sentenced to ten years in prison in Oklahoma because she possessed 'radical' books that made her, according to the prosecutor and the jury, a Communist and a felon. . . . The Supreme Court of the United States will rectify their injustices, doubtless, if they have money enough to carry their cases up on appeal. . . ."

"If they have money"! What could be more apt? These people are poor people, and they do not have money enough. But the ILD (112 East 19th St., New York City) is counting on progressive America to make good that deficiency.

ELIZABETH GREEN.

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NEW MASSES

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Business Manager

CARL BRISTEL

★

Eighth Week

WHETHER or not it is true that Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill have been meeting somewhere out on the Atlantic, and we think the rumors can't all be fishing stories, big decisions and big developments seem to be at hand. What the chief executives are talking about isn't too hard to surmise: it would be logical to assume that Harry Hopkins is reporting in detail the impressions of his trip to Moscow; there are problems for both Britain and the United States in the report that Vichy is about to join in big ceremonies inaugurating the new order in Europe; there is the definite possibility of a showdown with Japan over Thailand; the war in Europe remains to be won, but it would not be surprising if the conversations at sea are also concerned with the problems of the peace that lie only a bit below the surface of the problems of war.

But there is one question on which there ought be no hesitation from the American point of view, and that is *urging the speediest completion of plans to invade the continent and open a full-scale Western Front against Hitler*. On this question certainly, if Roosevelt and Churchill were not meeting last week, they should have been. Churchill has been variously reported for and against an immediate invasion of Europe. On his way to Singapore, Duff Cooper denied that the invasion was being planned. Yet in Britain popular demand for action has been growing; trade unions, local labor parties, and newspapers have been asking again and again: what are we waiting for? The news of Anglo-Soviet cooperation in the air over Norway and Clement Attlee's hint of cooperation by sea near Murmansk is encouraging, and there is some reason to believe that the first Soviet air raids over Berlin were carried out by prior arrangement with the RAF. But that is hardly enough. Two months have passed of a most terrific struggle, in which, as last week's Soviet communiques report, the Soviet people are making enormous sacrifices to stave off the fascist advance. The great hope of Anglo-Soviet alliance consisted precisely in the fact that it not only spelled salvation for the British people but it made possible a rapid conclusion, rather than a long drawn out struggle of this war. Americans who identify themselves with the British and Soviet cause have every reason for impatience. They have every reason to insist that Mr. Roosevelt encourage the British to tackle the continent, and be prepared to give the British every assistance toward that end.

INVADING THE CONTINENT is not merely a technical question, or a problem of choosing the best battlefield. It is also a matter of timing. And there is no time like the present. Already the Nazis have been forced to place all of Norway under martial law; last week most of Serbia was decreed under martial law as well, and reports are that the Nazi invaders are holding only the biggest towns in Serbia, so powerful has the guerrilla movement become. Every day brings reports of new fines which the Nazis have imposed on towns and cities all over Europe for resisting the invaders, reports of death sentences by the hundreds for anti-fascist actions. And the mere fact that Hitler is reported to be calling a ceremonial confab of his satellites, to bolster the fiction that Europe is "crusading against Bolshevism" is proof of how badly the Nazis need such stimulants to German morale. Soviet armies have demonstrated conclusively that they will hold the Nazi push, and even more. An invasion on the continent now would make the V-campaign a reality. It would open up the prospect of disintegrating Hitler's power before winter comes. What are they waiting for?

SIGNIFICANTLY, the friends of Hitler in this country also sense the approaching climax. And there are signs that the appeasement crowd is putting on everything it has. The former ambassador to Belgium, John Cudahy, came out last week with the request that the President do nothing less than appeal for an immediate peace. Lindbergh has been coming into the East with speeches along the way; his speech in Cleveland, however, getting only a fraction of the audience expected. On the other hand, Henry Luce's *Life* (August 11 issue) handed him a splendiferous ten page play, describing him with loving-kindness as America's "Leader of Wartime Opposition." Despite the author's obvious admiration for his subject, Lindbergh emerges unmistakably as anti-Semitic, racist, pro-Nazi. Then there was the statement from fifteen Republicans, who charged that the war no longer presented a clear issue of democracy, and called for cessation of aid to Britain and the Soviet Union. Some of the signatories are unimportant, superannuated relics of the Smoot-Hawley days, like the ex-governor of Illinois, Frank Lowden. And some are the appeasement standbys like Hoover. It was regrettable, however, that John L. Lewis loaned his name to this statement, the first public indication of his stand on the new turn of the war. That Lewis is a Republican of long standing was always well known, but that he chooses this time and this company to indicate where he stands is disappointing, even if Lewis meant to indicate that he was speaking only for himself, and in no way as the influential mentor of the CIO. In any case, if this will be his final stand, it is unfortunate. It only complicates the problems of the labor movement, from which the initiative against Hitlerism must come.

MEANWHILE, the New York *Times* continues its own variant of a negative attitude toward the war. Criticizing the administration's decision to extend full aid to the USSR, the *Times* raises the slogan of aid to Britain rather than aid to the USSR. By way of argument the *Times* rakes up the myth of the Soviet Union's unreliability in the summer of 1939, and invokes the slanderous hypothesis that the Soviet Union might yet sign a separate peace with Hitler. It remained for Roger Upham Pope of the Council for National Morale to rebuke the *Times* in its own readers' column. Pope reminds the *Times* of Mr. Chamberlain's great betrayal at Munich, gives the true story about the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations, and takes the *Times* to task for harping on Finland when all the world sees now under whose aegis the Finnish reactionaries have really been operating. It might only be necessary to add that it comes in rather bad grace for the *Times* to be worrying about the possibility of a separate Soviet peace with Hitler, when all last summer and fall and as late as the Hess affair the *Times* itself was worrying over the possibility of a separate peace from Britain's side. When the *Times* tries to separate aid to Britain from aid to the Soviet Union, it is in effect striving to undermine the Anglo-Soviet alliance. Those who argue that the United States should offer to get a peace with Hitler, like John Cudahy, could scarcely ask more.

THE EVIDENCE of the last ten days at least is that our country has begun to implement its pledges of aid for both fronts. Reports are that American tankers are taking oil supplies across the Pacific, that the British are diverting American-made planes for the Soviet fighting front, and that manufacturers have been given the go-ahead signal for production on Soviet orders. Reports are also that the USSR is buying aluminum, molybdenum, and other materials here. This is all to the good. It is fine to expand trade relations and renew trade treaties. But if our national interest demands support to the Soviet Union's struggle, a policy which was recognized in the American note to the Soviet ambassador—and a policy which we have urged for many weeks—then it is also true that the speed with which our support of the Anglo-Russian alliance develops in practical measures is the ultimate test of our devotion to the national interest. Speed in practical measures is the test of the administration's sincerity. And practical measures means clearing the north Atlantic. It means securing sea routes to Britain and opening up new ones to Murmansk. It means coordinating our war effort with the British, and backing them up for the earliest possible landing among the oppressed peoples of Europe who are waiting for the British and American banners over their still bleak horizons.

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Steel Priorities

GANO DUNN, former production consultant to OPM, was quietly returned to private life some weeks ago but the public will not forget him soon. Mr. Dunn will be remembered as the man who emphatically said just six months ago that steel capacity would exceed demands by 10,100,000 tons in 1941 and 2,100,000 tons in 1942—so it was silly to ask the steel companies to expand production. And now? A 100-percent priority order has been placed on steel, because of an expected deficit of 11,000,000 tons for the current year. This means absolutely no more steel for non-defense production. Mills which already have civilian orders must put them aside for defense work.

The effect of this on civilian life is incalculable. Not only will it drastically cut production of automobiles and frigidaires, which are heavily dependent on steel, but the output of more articles than we can list in this space. You have only to look around you to get an idea of how many things are made, in part at least, of steel. Even before the 100-percent priority was established, makers and purchasers of steel products felt the strain of the "shortage." It wasn't a real shortage, of course. As we have pointed out several times, nothing but the mulish refusal of the big steel industrialists to expand their plant capacity sufficiently has prevented our having a supply of the metal for all needs. Mr. Dunn's preposterous report was really the handiwork of these "captains of industry" who have always used the short cut to higher prices through curtailed production. Indeed the man who picked Mr. Dunn to do a "fair survey" of the industry's capacity was E. J. Stettinius, Jr., former chairman of US Steel and present head of the Priorities Division of OPM. No one, we think, will be naive enough to assume that Mr. Stettinius did not know even before last February what the production of his own industry was in relation to demand. Nor will anyone be taken in by the air of discovery with which the priorities director now announces that steel demand exceeds supply. The public, for one thing, received quite an education in "shortages" when it learned from congressional reports the true story behind aluminum priorities. The story was the same as that in steel—monopoly control of production.

Nor is the consumer alone hit by curtailed production of civilian commodities. Leon Henderson, price control administrator of OPM, predicted a few days ago that the unemployed army would soon be increased by 2,000,000 because of the closing down of consumer goods factories for lack of materials. The most intolerable feature of this situation is that it is so unnecessary, so plainly the result of deliberate waste and avidity. But this is also the most hopeful feature. For what is unnecessary can be obviated—as the aluminum workers' union has shown with its perfectly workable plan for expanding the industry's production by some billion tons a year. Give organized labor its rightful role in the direction of national defense and we shall hear less about "shortages." People are willing to do with less goods, to make any sacrifice essential to adequate defense, provided that the OPM leadership be cleansed of elements which have prevented a democratic functioning in the interest of real defense.

The UAW Convention

AS WE go to press, the convention of the United Automobile Workers (which changed its name to the more accurate "International Union of United Automobile, Aircraft, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America"), still has before it much unfinished business that will keep delegates in Buffalo at least several days longer. In consequence, it is too soon to give any real estimate of the gathering. Yet, for all the newspaper baiting, for all the wild tales of "factional control," it is clear that by far the greatest majority of UAW delegates are not following any single individual down the line.

At the very start of the sessions the dispute over whether the Allis-Chalmers delegation from Local 248 should be seated (because of alleged election irregularities) precipitated a roll call instructing President R. J. Thomas to appoint a committee that would proceed immediately to Milwaukee, there to hold a new election. The committee returned two days later; the majority complained that Harold Christoffel, president of Local 248, had refused to "cooperate." Thereupon, the convention demanded that Christoffel, sitting in the gallery, be given the floor to explain. The tall, fiery strike leader told the facts—and when he finished, the delegates roared approval, and orded an expanded committee to return to Milwaukee to get results.

Likewise when the Red-baiting factionalists, headed by Walter Reuther and his brother Victor, attempted to crucify Lew Michener of California because of the "unauthorized" North American strike in the aviation industry, the convention listened to all arguments and then refused to expel Michener as the minority report demanded, or to suspend him from holding any office whatsoever, as the majority report recommended. Instead the delegates adopted what they called the "super-minority" report given by one member of the grievance committee, which forbade Michener's becoming regional director for twelve months, but which did not ban him from holding any other elective or appointive office.

Throughout all debates President Thomas stressed the necessity of maintaining unity, of eliminating factionalism, of organizing and supporting the CIO program. In his opening address Thomas called for full support of the government's policy of lending all aid to Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China. And though the Red-baiters, with orders from Sidney Hillman, attempted to spread dissension, the determination grew as the convention developed not to tolerate splits or personal feuds. The smearing campaign against anyone who did not toe the Hillman line began to pall. The UAW-CIO convention may still be a deep disappointment to those who would harness this militant and powerful union to the chariot of capitulation to the monopolists. It may still answer those who would condemn it to weakness at a time when prospects for further organization in the automotive and airplane industries have never been greater.

The New Tax Proposals

IF YOU are a single person earning $14.50 a week, or married and earning $29, you may have to pay an income tax next year. Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau thinks you should: it would "broaden the tax base" by 6,543,000 more people in the very low income brackets and help raise that $5,000,000,000 additional revenue at which Mr. Morgenthau is aiming. The secretary of the treasury also told the Senate Finance Committee that the surtax on all individual incomes should start at eleven percent instead of five and that "excise" (sales) taxes on beer, gasoline, and cigarettes should be raised.

In short, Secretary Morgenthau is proposing that the tax bill which passed the House should be worsened in the Senate. As our editorial in the August 5 issue pointed out, the House measure was scandalously unfair in its disproportionate taxes on smaller incomes, its sales levies on articles of common use, and its gentle consideration for the wealthy. Mr. Morgenthau's suggestions would make it almost outrageous. True, he asked for higher excess-profits levies, a plugging of some loopholes in corporate taxes, and taxation of state and local securities. He also urged that the Senate restore the House's original provision forcing husbands and wives to file joint income tax returns, thereby ending a favorite tax dodge of the wealthy. These proposals certainly should be adopted—but not, as Mr. Morgenthau suggests, in order to sweeten the tax dose he prescribes for the poor. If $5,000,000,000 more revenue is needed for defense, then it must be raised. And it can be raised, fairly and democratically, by tapping the great reservoirs of untaxed or lightly taxed wealth in the possession of a relative handful of ruling families.

Kearny's "V" Picketline

WORKERS on the picketline around the Federal Shipbuilding & Drydock Co. at Kearny, N. J., wear "V for Victory" buttons. They have a special right to. For these 16,000 strikers, members of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers, CIO, are trying to force officials of Federal Shipbuilding to grant a legitimate union demand and obey the recommendation of a United States government agency. There is only one issue and it is exceedingly clear. On July 26 the National Defense Mediation Board recommended to the company that it accept a modified form of the closed union shop. The company refused—and on August 7 the workers went on strike. By its recalcitrance Federal Shipbuilding (a subsidiary of US Steel) is holding up work

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on $450,000,000 worth of defense orders. So plain is this fact that company officials are finding it very difficult to get away with attacking the workers patriotism. Strikers have called on the government to take over the plant to protect labor's rights and ensure defense production. Now the company is making an extremely unsubtle grandstand play of also calling on the government to take the plant, "in the interest of national defense"—a hypocrisy which is exposed in the very words of the company's request, declaring that "the only issue . . . is maintenance of the open shop."

But the V buttons have even more meaning. For Kearny is one sector of an American "Eastern Front" in the union's war against the open shop. West Coast shipyards operate under union shop contracts, but major yards of the East Coast are notoriously open shop. If Federal Shipbuilding is forced to obey the National Defense Mediation Board, then every shipyard on the Atlantic Coast will probably have to grant the closed shop or a modified form of it. Moreover, by insisting on its right to strike, the union has counter-attacked in the war waged by Sidney Hillman to force "no strike" contracts upon all organized shipyard labor. In this, also, the union is performing a patriotic service.

"Unity for Victory"

Two major trends are developing out of the welter of conflicting interests in the New York Mayoralty campaign. One grouping, responding to the overwhelming will of the populace, seeks the obliteration of Hitlerism: the other, sired by Tammany, responds to the appeasement urgings of reaction.

The Tammany candidate, William O'Dwyer, is winning the support of pro-Nazi, Bundist, Christian Front, America First, and other appeasement and anti-Semitic cliques. It is noteworthy that the Hearst press, in fulsomely championing O'Dwyer's candidacy, emphasizes his Irish-Catholic background by way of appealing to sectarian loyalties rather than the civic interests of the community as a whole. On the other hand, Mayor LaGuardia, who seems assured of nomination by the Republican, City Fusion, and American Labor parties, is associated in the public mind with the foreign policies of President Roosevelt. Unfortunately, recent actions and attitudes of Mr. LaGuardia cannot be considered contributions to the strength of the anti-fascist front. The New York CIO must have had this in mind when it declared the other day, "The fight to destroy fascism abroad must be accompanied by an all-out effort to extend and strengthen democracy at home." Mr. LaGuardia's unfair treatment of the Transport Workers Union and other labor groups has been described by Philip Murray as an "anti-CIO attitude." His budget cutting and his efforts to appease his reactionary enemies have also provided ammunition for the Tammany-O'Dwyer campaign. Appeasement, locally, as on the international scene, cannot but have fatal consequences.

For this latter reason, all supporters of a wide, anti-fascist front feel that the refusal by the Republican leaders to renominate Manhattan Borough Pres. Stanley M. Isaacs is a major political error. The Christian Front, America First groups feed upon such concessions precisely as Hitler grew fat upon the offerings provided him. Mr. Isaacs' excellent record in office is admitted by the very people who oppose his candidacy. Their objection to him is based solely upon the fact that he refused to be intimidated in his association with progressive labor and in his appointment to a minor office of Simon W. Gerson, a member of the Communist Party.

Indications abound that the electorate will not accept the un-American stand of the Republican leaders. The voters in general, and labor in particular, respond instinctively to the chief issue before the city: the unity of all who hold a progressive position on municipal affairs and who, above everything else, stand for the total destruction of Hitler and full help to the Soviet Union and Britain.

Perhaps the clearest expression of this need is found in the municipal election platform, issued as we go to press, of the City Election Committee of the Communist Party. We refer to a few highlights in the statement. Israel Amter, Communist candidate for mayor, put it this way: "One issue, one enemy, one war—the smashing of Hitlerism." The keynote of his campaign, he said, will be "Unity for Victory." Ominous words to all those who endorse, openly or covertly, a victory for Der Fuehrer.

Framing the Evidence

When the editors of *Life* magazine asked Margaret Bourke-White to visit Moscow and send home some photographs, they may have expected some nice juicy pictures of naked, starving, begging children blackening the streets with their misery. If so, they must have received a severe jolt when the photos came in. What they found were pictures of students preparing for master's examinations, taking notes in a lecture course on Greek history, strolling happily in the halls of Moscow University. They saw chubby, smiling children playing with their dolls in a sunlit nursery school. They confronted trim streets, theaters, museums. They found themselves staring at crowds watching a soccer match in the Dynamo Stadium, an editorial board meeting of *Pravda,* an agricultural exhibit, a well-stocked grocery, the beautiful architecture of Mayakovsky subway station.

Consternation in Mr. Luce's office. What to do? Soviet pictures are scoop news these days, and Margaret Bourke-White's above all. They must be run. But a brainy sub-executive gets an idea. Thank God for captions: we can at least angle the stories. As a result the pictures, made in Moscow, portray one city; and the captions, written in New York, portray another. "Moscow still smells like Moscow," says the New York office, to impress Miss Bourke-White with the fact that the nose is quicker than the eye. "Most students take safe and ancient subjects," says New York, while a photo shows a student preparing a dissertation in the "ancient" subject of "Soviet Planned Economy." "The seamy side of proletarian life" is omitted, says the editor, in answer to a picture showing two married students at the Technical Institute, both twenty-six, living on a scholarship, studying at the table where their two children are playing an educational game. Moscow is still a "mysterious" city, shouts *Life's* caption writer, in defiance of a photo showing a couple of fresh-looking girls doing cross-word puzzles.

Life must have an awfully low opinion of its readers to expect to get away with this sort of stuff.

Tagore

The death of Rabindranath Tagore at the age of eighty ends the career of a great cultural leader of modern India. Best known to the outside world as a poet—he won the Nobel prize for literature in 1913—Tagore was also a distinguished historian, painter, musician, and playwright. Perhaps his greatest achievement was to renew the pride of his countrymen in their native cultural traditions. Forty years ago it was fashionable in India to ape the literary world of England. By his emphasis on folk music and folk poetry Tagore explored the rich cultural resources of which his oppressed land could boast. In this respect he made a very important contribution to the national emancipation movement.

His approach to the emancipation question was at times confused and eclectic. Believing that Indian culture should be a synthesis of Western science and Eastern "spiritual resources," he tended toward a mystical reconciliation of the forces furthering and opposing India's freedom. He was later to recognize that the future which he envisaged was possible only if India were free and could enter an international association voluntarily. In 1936, following a visit to the Soviet Union, Tagore expressed great appreciation of the treatment of national minorities under the Soviets, contrasting it with the treatment of his own people under imperialist rule. "I must confess," he wrote, "to the envy with which my admiration was mixed to see the extraordinary enthusiasm and skill with which the measures for producing food, providing education and fighting against disease were being pushed forward in their vast territories. There is no separating line of mistrust or insulting distinctions between Soviet Europe and Soviet Asia."

Tagore was knighted by the late King George. But it is interesting to note that he resigned his title in protest against the killing of Indian civilians by English soldiers in the Amritsar massacre of 1919. It is regrettable that the immigration laws of the United States, with what Tagore termed their "barbarous" application to "Eastern and colored people," prevented the poet from entering this country in 1929. Tagore's behavior on these two occasions illustrated the vigorous opposition which he raised to the system of discrimination under which his enslaved people labor.

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SHOLOKHOV'S CHARACTERS

The people and their land are the heroes of his great epic of the Don. Samuel Sillen continues the discussion of the novel's poetry and profound humanity.

THE SILENT DON, *comprising two volumes:* AND QUIET FLOWS THE DON *and* THE DON FLOWS HOME TO THE SEA, *by Mikhail Sholokhov. A. A. Knopf. Vol. 1, $3. Vol. 2, $3.50. The set, boxed, $6.*

THERE seems to be a widespread impression, fostered by several reviewers, that the two volumes of Sholokhov's *The Silent Don* can be read independently. This impression is altogether erroneous. The organic development of character and theme can be grasped only if the novel is read consecutively and as a whole. To read only the second volume of Sholokhov is to remain ignorant of the springs of human behavior, to miss the sense of dramatic climax, and to get only a misshapen fragment of the total meaning. This is particularly true because, as I suggested last week, Sholokhov handles a vast body of complex materials whose inter-relationship is vitally significant. A partial reading will necessarily impair both the esthetic appreciation and political understanding of the novel.

Thus, the stormy vacillations and ultimate tragedy of Gregor Melekhov must be followed closely from the opening pages of *And Quiet Flows the Don* to the concluding paragraph of *The Don Flows Home to the Sea.* Some reviewers have expressed "surprise" that a Soviet author should treat an anti-Communist like Gregor as a central character. This being the open season for surprises in newspaper commentaries on the Soviet Union, such a reaction is not unnatural. Alexander Nazaroff, in the New York *Times,* praises Sholokhov because "there is not a trace of the deadening 'Marxist approach' in his pages" and because he treats "both his White and Red characters with the same genuine insight into human emotions." The answer is that it is the *Times* reviewer and not the Soviet writer who thinks in stereotypes. It is getting to be somewhat boring to read that a book by a Sholokhov, or Alexei Tolstoy, or Kataev, an Aragon or Friedrich Wolf, a Richard Wright or Albert Maltz, is a great "non-Marxist book" by a Marxist. The truth is less paradoxical. It is just because Sholokhov is a good Marxist that he portrays *all* his characters with such superb insight into both their limitations and strength. For the essence of socialist realism is the truthful depiction of people's lives in all their many-sidedness. As we shall see in a moment, this ideal of objectivity is far from implying a neutrality of response. The author does not arbitrarily impose his views upon the characters. He permits them to behave in accordance with the laws of their personalities as conditioned in a specific historical context. Judgment of their actions is embedded in the structural relations of the work of art itself.

Cossack Mother and Child

When Gregor goes off with the Cossacks of his native Tatarsk to fight the Germans in 1914, his character is as yet unformed, though the basic urges which are to divide him are already apparent. In his own proud and impetuous way, he is a rebel. From the start he is at odds with the established habits of the village. Even in his smile, we are told, there is the same rather savage quality which distinguishes his father, Pantaleimon. He woos Aksinia insistently, unafraid of her husband, Stepan Astakhov, defiant of Pantaleimon's threats and curses, unashamed of village gossip. The love of Gregor and Aksinia burns with "a single, shameless flame" which is to cast its tragic glow over later events. It is a full-blooded, passionate, and earthy love affair for which I can find no parallel in contemporary literature. And yet this rebellious intensity and daring of Gregor is tempered with the prejudices of a Cossack who cannot fully tear himself from the patriarchal ways. When Aksinia proposes that they go far away to the region of the mines, as the alternative to inevitable separation, Gregor remembers that he has to do his military service the following year; he refuses to leave the steppes; he is deeply attached to his family. "I'll never leave the village," he declares, ironically unaware of the years of warfare which will make him a virtual stranger in Tatarsk.

Gregor's marriage to Natalia Korshunov, arranged by their families in the traditional manner, is doomed from the outset. Natalia is a lovable character, but her sweetness and utter devotion can only turn Gregor's indifference into fondness and not into that overriding passion which governs his life with Aksinia. In portraying the tempestuous struggle between the lawful wife and the mistress, Sholokhov evokes complete sympathy with both. Moral judgments become irrelevant once we feel the integrity and strength of Natalia's and Aksinia's love and their incapacity to refashion the unhappy situation in which they are placed. Gregor himself, without seeking to do violence to either woman's feelings, is the cause of Natalia's attempted suicide and Aksinia's sorry affair with Eugene Listnitsky—just as, without wishing it, his conduct leads eventually to Natalia's death after a crude abortion and Aksinia's death by a soldier's bullet as she flees across the lines with Gregor. "I can't tear you out of my heart," he tells Aksinia in a moment of self-revelation. "Here I've got children growing up, and I'm myself half grey, and how many years lie like an abyss between us! . . . Sometimes as I look back on my life it seems like an empty pocket turned inside out. . . ."

Gregor's tragically contradictory relation to Natalia and Aksinia parallels his ambig-

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uous relation to the social conflicts in which he takes part. It should be emphasized that this is not a mechanical parallel, since neither Natalia nor Aksinia represents any particular creed. The connection is psychological, and it results in a deepening of the harsh human struggles which give such an ironic significance to the title of the novel. "You're like the weathercock on a roof," the Red Cossack Kotliarov tells Gregor. "You turn with the wind. Such men as you make life hard." Hard for themselves as well as for others, Kotliarov might have added. And yet Gregor's uncertainties are created neither by opportunism nor by the elaborate self-searchings of the "superfluous man" of nineteenth-century fiction. There is a fierce honesty in his shifts from the Reds to the Whites. His actions, it is true, are often far from laudable, but he is never morally contemptible. In his figure there is a hard core of essential dignity which survives, no matter how far he strays.

The conflict between the conservative and rebellious strains in his nature, between his intense nationalism and his hatred of the old officer caste, is skillfully portrayed in its complex evolution. He cannot, at first, get used to killing men in battle; sensing, though not quite understanding, the cruelty of an imperialist war which he, like all other loyal Cossacks, is prosecuting on behalf of the Czar. Bitterly he exclaims to his elder brother Piotra: "They've set us fighting one another, but they don't come themselves." Gregor is revolted by the creed of the Cossack Alexei Uriupin who tells him: "You're a Cossack, and it's your business to cut down without asking questions." After he is wounded, it is natural that, lying in a Moscow hospital, he should discuss the meaning of the war with a Ukrainian machine-gunner, Granzha. The system on which Gregor's beliefs had been based, already rotten with the iniquitous war, needed only the jolt of Granzha's unanswerable arguments couched in simple peasant terms.

GREGOR'S MOOD at this point is expressed in one of those delightful little dramas which Sholokhov presents so brilliantly. A high personage of the Imperial family is coming to pay a visit to the dear wounded boys who have fought so valiantly at the front for our little father. The hospital officials are all aflutter. They re-dress the wounds, and they change the bedclothes ahead of schedule. They even instruct the soldiers how to say Yes to Her Imperial Highness. The great day finally comes and the lady enters with her uniformed and perfumed retinue. She makes her round of the wards, asking stupid questions and distributing little ikons. When the aristocratic lady with the marsupial cheeks approaches Gregor and asks him in a bored tone what district he is from, he feels the same queer chopping sensation that he experiences when going into attack. His lips quiver. His body sways as though broken. And, pointing under the bed: "Excuse me. I badly want to—your Imperial—just a little need." Gregor was forbidden any food for three days, but the cook and his comrades in the ward, with an ample sense of appreciation, kept him supplied. The situation is described objectively. Whether it is "neutral" the reader may decide for himself.

At the time of the Revolution in the autumn of 1917, Gregor's opinions undergo another crisis. A captain in his regiment, Yefim Izvarin, the son of a well-to-do Cossack, appeals to him with his views on Cossack separatism. He argues that the Don region should form a federative alliance, throw out all "foreigners," end 400 years of subjection by Great Russia. Izvarin is against all "protectors," whether Kornilov, Kerensky, or Lenin, and he envisages a return to the idyllic Cossack existence of the medieval period. But the Cossack Podtielkov, who sympathizes with the Bolsheviks, represents for Gregor an equally persuasive position. Izvarin's separatist plan, he argues, would mean the same old soup, only a little thicker. The *atamans*, he insists, will continue to oppress. The Revolution must go on to the end, until the government passes completely to the people.

As the civil war develops, Gregor becomes alienated from the Red troops. He fears that the Soviet government is fighting to seize the Cossack lands and possessions. At the same time he retains an irreconcilable bitterness against the White leaders, even though he is himself commander of a division. Fighting the Red squadrons along the Don with uncurbed vigor, he no longer believes very deeply in either side. "There's no truth in this life," he once exclaims. "Whoever masters the other gets the fire for himself." And at one time he reflects, even while intoxicated with his power as a commander: "Who am I leading them against? Against the people!"

What Sholokhov achieves finally is a great sense of disillusionment on Gregor's part—a sense of disillusionment, with the counter-revolution. Gregor, the "enemy" of the civil war period, is a powerful lens through which we see the forces arrayed against the Soviets. These forces have manipulated Gregor's desire for Cossack independence in such a way that he serves Kaledin, Kornilov, the invading White army, and the foreign intervention. It is Gregor's tragedy that, seeing this, as in his interview with General Fitzhelaurov, he is capable neither of undoing the havoc he has helped bring nor of making a complete alliance with the Reds. For even though he serves, toward the end, with Budenny's Soviet forces, he cannot be forgiven by Misha Koshevoi, who has become chairman of the Tatarsk revolutionary committee. His services with Fomin's bandit army are the last expression of a broken and unbelieving man. In the end he is left with his child Mishatka: "This was all life had left to him, all that for a little longer gave him kinship with the earth and with the spacious world which lay glittering under the chilly sun."

In the meantime, the forces of a new life which surge around Gregor thrust up a host of splendid characters who grow with the Revolution and who know, even at the moment of death, what it is they are struggling for. Sholokhov never sentimentalizes his Communist characters, but his portraits of them shine with a great love and comprehension. Who could ever forget the superb figure of Ilia Bunchuk? In origin a Cossack, Bunchuk had lived in Moscow as a machinist. He serves at the front as a machine-gunner, teaching the Cossacks to turn against the Czar in the World War days, urging them to withhold support from Kornilov in 1917. His love

Barricades of Intellect

IT WAS in the critical days of November 1936, in Spain. A group of volunteers belonging to the English wing of the French "Paris Commune" Battalion—among whom were also a number of American students—were assigned to defend the Philosophy Building located in University City on the outskirts of Madrid. These volunteers piled up stout barricades against windows and doors, using the tomes of the Philosophy Library for the purpose. The big, bulky volumes of the German philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were found no whit inferior to the immense dictionaries as barricade material. Thus the works of Leibnitz, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Schopenhauer, became the building blocks that went into the defense structure.

Behind these barricades of the quintessence of German and European culture the volunteers successfully withstood repeated attacks by Franco's Moors and Foreign Legionnaires. German philosophy stood up firm and unyielding against the bullets of the fascist rebels. Finally, the high command of the "crusaders for God" were compelled to order into action the Nazi field artillery, which was there in great numbers. The artillery attack, carried out under the banner of the swastika, then proceeded to destroy the finest heritage of the German intellect, and the great French Encyclopedists. The Nazis scored a great victory over these "forerunners of cultural Bolshevism."

Some months later I told this story to some friends in Madrid. Among them was a well-known American writer. Wilhelm, who at the time was commanding a battalion of the Eleventh Brigade, said: "How the world will hate and despise us!" "Us?" demanded Heinz, the commissar. "Us Germans? But that is just why we are here, digging in, so that the world will not confuse the Germans with the Nazis."

The American writer spoke up. "It is a fine thing that you German workers are here, and writers and intellectuals, too." The words "writers too" he repeated several times. He was silent for a while, then, pointing into space, he added: "Often it has been no easy matter to prove that the Nazis are not the German people. Now it is easier because the Thaelmann Battalion is fighting here. That's fine. It clears the name of the German people."

HANS SCHMIDT.

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affair with Anna Pogoodko, a Jewess assigned to his machine gun section at Rostov, is a lyrical episode which remains singing in one's consciousness long after one has suffered at Anna's heroic death in battle and Ilia's murder before a firing squad. Bound together by a deep faith in the Soviet future, their brief lives give imperishable evidence of the heights to which human beings may rise. Only a writer who, in every fiber of his being, feels gratitude for their selfless devotion could have given their fate such poignant beauty. If tears do not come in reading these pages, it is because there is something more profound and enduring here than sorrow. And, one must say parenthetically, no further assurance is needed that the Soviet reader will never, never let the heritage of Ilia and Anna go down.

Indeed, this novel is permeated with a love for the people and the land which is overwhelming. That is the remarkable quality which distinguishes not only Sholokhov's work but most of the Soviet novels which have so far been translated. To the casual reader this may seem paradoxical. For there is so much bloodshed, so much suffering, so much incredible torture in Sholokhov's book. He has a tremendous gift for presenting physical violence with an immediacy and emotional shock that sometimes makes William Faulkner seem a little prissy. The impact of the battle scenes is harrowing. One will never forget the horrible death by torture of Ivan Kotliarov, nor the scrunch of flesh as Natalia slashes her throat with a scythe blade, nor the ghastly mass rape in the early World War days. But all this pain, described with an unflinching realism that reminds one of the Duke of Cornwall's stepping down hard on Gloucester's eyeball, is not sensationalism for its own sake. In portraying the present war with Germany, a future Soviet novelist will be no more disposed than Sholokhov to treat it as a pink tea party. There is cruelty in the world, and no realist can escape it. But this cruelty, in Sholokhov's work, takes place in an historical framework. It is not an expression of "man's inherent brutishness." It is not a racial feature, whether "Cossack" or "German." It makes *sense,* because it has specific social and historical origins, purposes, effects; and making sense, violence can be assimilated by the imagination within a larger framework. We can understand violence, and we can hate those responsible for it. "Damn them. . . . Damn them!" exclaims Ilia Bunchuk. "Not even with death will their guilt be wiped out. . . ." Guilt against mankind can never be wiped out.

No, Sholokhov's love is not weak or sentimental. It is amazing how *hard* his most sympathetic characters can be. But they are hard because they are animated by a desire to overcome those white-gloved generals in the rear who order out the cannons against the people. And the people, the people and their land, are the heroes of this epic. Only the people, Sholokhov has written, quoting Stalin, are immortal. What a travesty, then, is the review by Milton Hindus in the New York *Herald Tribune,* in which he says that "In general, man makes a pretty poor showing in this book." But the value of this judgment is as high as that of his cryptic declaration, "I am told that Soviet critics chided Sholokhov for the unresolved ending of his book." Mr. Hindus' informant no doubt explained to him that Sholokhov was punished for his "unresolved ending" by being elected to the Supreme Soviet, by having imposed upon him the Stalin Prize of 100,000 rubles, by seeing his novel turned into a film as well as into an opera, and that he has been "chided" in public by having his book placed into the hands of millions of readers. Only a pessimist could read pessimism into this novel. Its poetry, its humor, its profound humanity sweep the more humble reader into the capacious and friendly world of great imaginative literature.

SAMUEL SILLEN.

A third and concluding article on the Sholokhov novel will appear next week.

Understating the Problem

FULL EMPLOYMENT, *by John H. G. Pierson. Yale University Press. $2.50.*

CAN the industries of the United States provide "full employment" for everyone who wants to work at prevailing wages, with due allowance for reasonable delays in finding work? (Full employment is defined as a state of affairs in which there is no involuntary unemployment.) It could be achieved, says Dr. Pierson, only under one of two systems of production: either (1) a system of planned production, or (2) under appropriate monetary controls in a market economy.

The author cites the Soviet experience as an outstanding and successful system of planned production. "The Soviet Union, with its five-year plans, has provided by far the largest and most complete example of production planning of which there is any record. . . . The fact that a guarantee of jobs with pay is written into the Soviet Union's present constitution indicates that full employment is regarded as fundamental in principle. That it has been secured in practice seems established by the best of available information. . . . A system of planned production need experience no difficulty in maintaining full employment."

But a system of monetary controls in a market (capitalist) economy, Dr. Pierson thinks, can be expected to appeal to Americans right now a good deal more than an economy with an over-all production plan. A system of monetary controls would involve direct social control over the rate of consumer spending. The government, under such a system, would somehow underwrite the volume of consumer spending for some time ahead.

Assuming that Pierson's plans for monetary control would be enforceable, which is certainly open to question, they would involve the interlocking of government with private capitalist interests. So long as private capital continues to function, any monetary control

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would be in the interest of the dominating capitalist groups. Such control is therefore nothing but a phase of fascism. And the truth is that Pierson's whole discussion of employment evades the underlying class issues. His description of planning in the Soviet Union implies that such planning could be carried through without the crucial shift of ownership and power to a genuine socialist state.

Because of this failure to recognize that the reasons for unemployment are to be found in the form of production, and class structure of capitalism, the author understates the problem, the reasons for its persistence, and what its abolition would involve. He says, for example: "One may be prepared to find that certain employers of labor who share the general opinion that *fluctuations* in unemployment ought to be eliminated will be in favor of policies designed to perpetuate *a large normal* volume of unemployment, in order to keep the upper hand in the process of bargaining over wages." (Italics in original.)

Labor knows from experience that it is not simply "certain employers" but owners of industry as a group who, in their effort to keep wages down to a minimum, require a large reserve labor supply outside the plant gates. The entire private profit system, in fact, depends upon and assumes the continuance of a substantial volume of unemployment.

GRACE HUTCHINS.

Minor Moralities

THE HERMIT PLACE, *by Mark Shorer. Random House. $2.50.*

"LITERATURE, which sets out to simplify life, actually only complicates it, suggests to the simple man a thousand complex ways of feeling, refines his sensibilities beyond all need, complicates infinitely his character, his motives, his sensations, his experience of daily life, disables him for action and for healthy appetite." These are the words of Tom Wilson, one of the eight characters in *The Hermit Place*. Possibly they also represent a statement of the author's limited respect for his own craft. Obviously it is not literature in general and seldom really great literature that operates as an enervation of the simple human impulses. But perhaps *The Hermit Place* itself is just such a work of art, whose musing and thin-drawn narrative is irretrievably trivial, remaining more of an academic exercise on minor moralities than a real novel.

Mr. Shorer's calendar of one year for a small group of wealthy intellectuals is principally concerned with the love of two sisters for the same man. He dies leaving a legend of himself as a symbol of integrity and action. "Memory" is perhaps the key word in the book, which is almost an essay on that faculty. Neither Gracia whom he loved nor Marge whom he didn't nor their husbands—Tom, who never quite knew the truth about his wife, and John, who could not escape the truth about his—recover from the change made in their lives by this handsome aviator. With an adroit reversal of effect, Mr. Shorer

SHOLOKHOV

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illustrates the reactions of these four and of their friends to the accidental discovery that this glamour boy was very much of a heel. Somehow very little mending is accomplished. None of them, not even the cynical young scientist, Cate, can ever surmount the ineluctable conditions of memory. And for John, to remember becomes quite literally to go mad.

The story is really quite as bare as it sounds, despite the fact that it is built upon a delicate system of speculative prefaces, sometimes quite interesting in themselves. Out of the turgid welter of events in which he lives, the author selects only the banal iterative "modern," repeating a note of febrile hysteria and personal malaise from the F. Scott Fitzgerald twenties. Despite the sense of seriousness and feeling imparted by the style, the troubles of the people in *The Hermit Place* are only the intimate frustrations of the leisure-class personality. Sex, Death, and Memory become not the great evocators of emotion, but only rather meaningless and interchangeable counters. For the reader, therefore, this book is one of those sterile endeavors that "would disable him for action and for healthy appetite."

MILLICENT LANG.

The Uninquiring Reporter

DICTATORS AND DEMOCRATS, *edited by Lawrence Fernsworth. Robert McBride & Co. $3.*

THIS soup-to-nuts anthology of newspaper interviews with the leading political figures of our time by the foremost correspondents reveals, more than anything else, the weakness of commercial journalism. No single interview may convince the reader of it; but if he were to ask himself what picture of modern society emerged from this book as an entirety, he might remember the "dark gray and hyperthyroid" (Dorothy Thompson's version), the "flat, non-magnetic China-blue" (H. R. Knickerbocker's) or the "very dark blue" (Lothrop Stoddard's) eyes of Hitler. He might recall similar personal and physical trimmings of Churchill, Goering, Kemal Ataturk, Konoye, and others. The difference between a dictator and a democrat becomes the difference between a twitching nose and a twinkle in the eye.

When the interviewer admires his subject, he dissolves in uncritical humility. When he does not, he adopts a cockiness which leaves one with an impression of dislike but not of understanding. Each personality takes his unique battle position in a given sphere of influence; but the battlefield itself, the people, the economic resources, the social terrain, are not there. The individual is nothing but a posture taken before strictly static, two-dimensional scenery.

The exceptions are notably those in which the reporter has tried to get the person to explain his conception of the social meaning of his power, and his relation to the people whom he rules or who give him strength. Such is Thomas Fingal Healy's exposition of De Valera's Irish Nationalism. On the other hand, the most stupid reporting jobs are Clare Boothe's "irrelevant talk" (her own words—vacuity is her profession) with Ciano, the "handsome, amiable and slippery Count"; and Eugene Lyons' interview with himself in the presence of the "immense, vague, sinister" Stalin who, Mr. Lyons admits, didn't turn out to be a monster after all and even appended to this clownish piece of reporting the perfect comment, "More or less correct."

CHARLES HUMBOLDT.

Brief Reviews

THE LUNGFISH AND THE UNICORN, *by Willy Ley. Modern Age Books. $2.75.*

This book is aptly described by its subtitle: "An Excursion into Romantic Zoology." For there is romance aplenty in these sparkling essays on the dodo and the platypus, the geirfugl and the giant sloth, the lungfish and the unicorn. The romance, however, is not an adventitious literary affectation nor does it impair the soundness of the presentation.

The zoological knowledge of the average layman is limited to the domesticated animals, the denizens of the zoo, and the "type forms" of the elementary biology course. Whatever his momentary wonder at first acquaintance with these organisms, the false sense of knowledge that derives from their being classified merely as bears or cats or fish, soon leads to an indifference toward them which is generally accorded the commonplace. Zoology so conceived is about as exciting as a dissection manual, or a museum cabinet of dusty stuffed birds.

Any organism, however, properly studied in terms of its natural history and its evolutionary significance, may be very interesting. And this Mr. Ley does. But the special excellence of his work will be found in his accounts of such items as the legend of the unicorn, the attempts to settle the riddle of the "sea-serpent" of Loch Ness, the discovery of and great confusion in classifying the platypus, that fantastic duck-billed, egg-laying mammal, and the recreation of the recently extinct aurochs by outbreeding the beast from related domesticated cattle. Here we see science employed not merely as catalogued knowledge, but as a method for discovering and organizing knowledge in the field of zoology. The author shows us that this digging out of fact from an often obscure world and giving it proper significance, partakes of the essence of romance. *The Lungfish and the Unicorn* will undoubtedly interest the layman. But the biologist will also profit much by reading it.

SHELTER, *by Jane Nicholson. Viking Press. $2.50.*

In the fall of 1940, the luftwaffe covered London with bombs, taking thousands of lives, especially in the working class areas which were not provided with adequate shelters. In London's West End area the shelters were better equipped and more numerous, so the

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sum total of death and suffering was much less. It is life in this part of London that Miss Nicholson writes about.

The story of how Louise, an Oxford graduate and member of London's literati, handles a number of personal problems which are intensified by the bombings, is the main thread of the narrative. Deeply moved by the tragedies which the war and the bombings heap upon her friends and her relatives, Louise genuinely desires to participate in the war effort and the spirit of resistance to Hitler. However, her knowledge and understanding are sorely limited by a kind of upper class snobbishness which leads her to sniff at the common people in London's East End and recoil in esthetic distaste from their huddled forms "in Anderson shelters, under staircases, inside railway arches." Still, she can resent the fact that the leisure classes are at "the cushy end of the war."

The author does not illuminate the essence of anti-fascist resistance. Yet in spite of this major failing she is caught up in the broad and mighty currents of opposition to Hitlerism and the desire to obliterate it. Nevertheless, it would not be unfair to say that she has only scratched the surface of her subject.

QUINCIE BOLLIVER, *by Mary King. Houghton, Mifflin Co. $2.50.*

The title of this novel is the name of its heroine and it is not very appropriate. For Quincie Bolliver, growing up in the post-boom years of a Texas oil town, remains always a little apart—dreamy, emotional, independent—from the town and its people. Her father and stepmother, the oil workers and their families are more ordinary, flesh-and-blood persons, forcing a hard living and pitifully little pleasure from a community pervaded by the acrid smell of raw oil. Quincie seems to belong to another book, a story in herself. Here she is a spectator and a rather passive one, despite her occasional impulsive rebellions against individuals—indirectly against circumstances.

There is more interest in the slightly tawdry, very human men and women who board at the "Paradise House," run by Quincie's stepmother. It is a fine old house, for Judith Paradise's folks were of the Texas gentility, but the bathtubs are never quite clean of oil and there's no privacy where privacy is most necessary for the only delight left the drudging. Even in delight most of them are cheated, trapped through their very efforts to snatch more than the unexciting measure which conventions permit. But the story is not so grim as this outline would indicate. Thwarted, often bitter as these people are, their life has the surface color of drama and sometimes even laughter. The faults of the novel (it is Miss King's first) are a certain awkwardness in manipulating the narrative and, more important, failure to evaluate the total strength of these men and women who do survive, even individually, their worst defeats.

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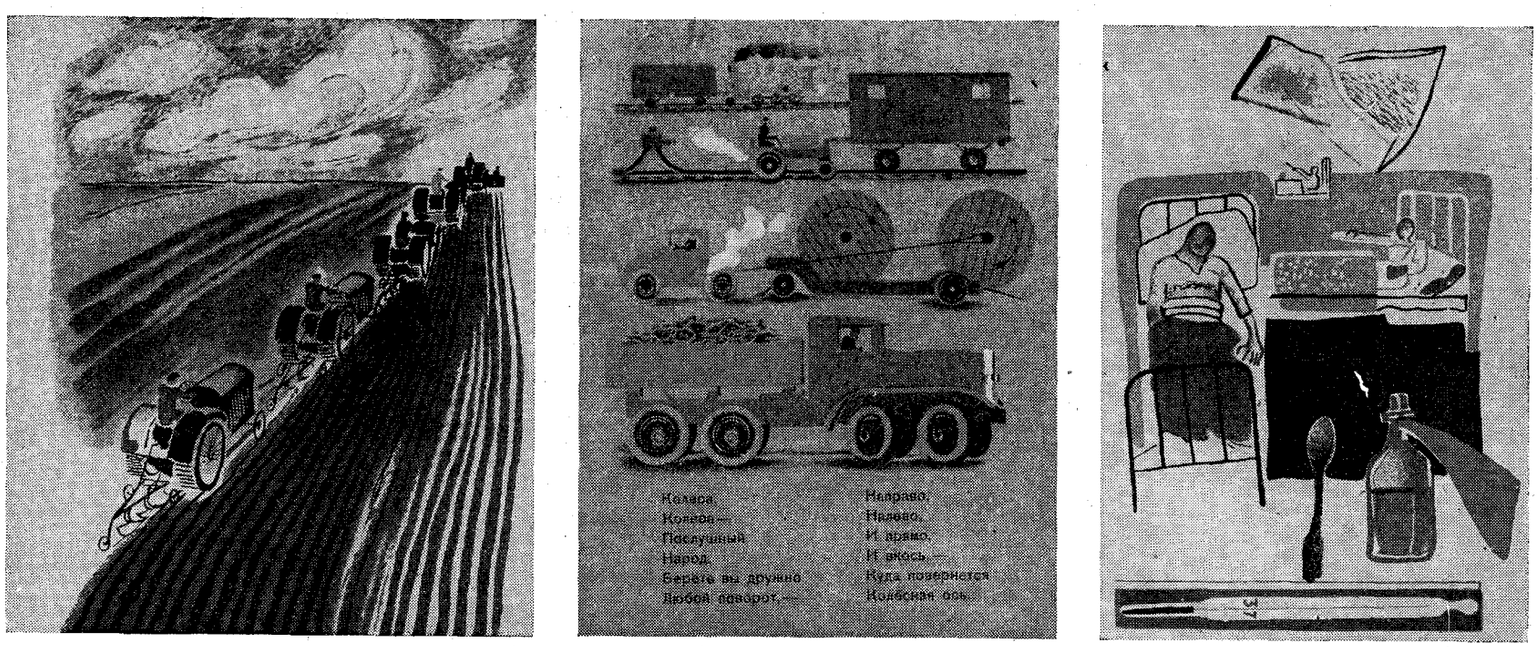

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FANTASY AND FUN

"Here Comes Mr. Jordan," a mish-mash of supernaturalism, turns out to be an amusing comedy . . . Glimpses of guerrilla fighting in the first newsreel of the Red Army in action.

IF YOU will discount the ancient and dishonorable "philosophy" that informs this effort, you are promised a very enjoyable time at *Here Comes Mr. Jordan,* a film fantasy fashioned by Sidney Buchman and Seton Miller and directed with considerable imagination by Alexander Hall.

The ancient and dishonorable philosophy you will have to discount is a mish-mash of predestination, supernaturalism, and reincarnation which would have you believe that everything is for the best, no matter how it may seem to turn out; that you cannot alter your destiny and may as well be satisfied with what you are, whether you are a prizefighter or a playboy millionaire.

What is important is that *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* is as amusing a fantasy-comedy as Hollywood has managed to concoct in some time. It is amusing because the comedy of mistaken identity has been transferred onto the astral plane, if you are following me. It is also amusing because it is engagingly written, charmingly played, and directed with considerable ingenuity.

The idea is that Joe Pendleton (Robert Montgomery), the "flying pug" who is on his way to the world's championship, cracks up in his private plane and finds that he is dead. But an error has been made. It wasn't his time to die yet; he had fifty more years to live. A heavenly messenger named Edward Everett Horton collected his soul before his time. And when Mr. Jordan, who is a sort of streamlined St. Peter played by Claude Rains, finds out the mistake, his sense of justice is outraged. He promises to get Joe a new physical "overcoat," which is about to become available. The "overcoat" turns out to be playboy Farnsworth, who is in process of being drowned in his bathtub by his wife and her lover, his private secretary. From this point on the fun becomes fast and furious, as the new Mr. Farnsworth rises from his bathtub as good as new, confounding his wife, her lover, his board of directors, the daughter of a man he has ruined, and all parties concerned. For it is a new Farnsworth who has been resurrected—a Farnsworth with the physical overcoat of the original, but the good-natured soul of Joe Pendleton.

Now this may sound pretty silly and from any profound vantage point it *is* pretty silly, but I will tell you more. Take it on faith, until you see it, that this gets to be terribly funny before it is all worked out. Joe ends up in still another body, but he still has the girl and the well-intentioned soul of his original incarnation. The writers' imagination flags near the end, for you can suspend your disbelief just so long, and no longer. But you will have suspended it long enough to get a few sound belly laughs and many an inconsequential chuckle.

Mr. Montgomery reveals once more that, within his limited range, he is an excellent comedian. Claude Rains, benign instead of his usual sinister self, is delightful, and many scenes are stolen by the reliable James Gleason, a fight manager who cannot deal with more than one astral body at a time.

THE FIRST newsreel from the Eastern Front has arrived; kep an eye out for it. It is a Paramount clip, released by Moscow and flown from there to London, and from London here. The reel runs between eight and ten minutes, and bears the title *Russia Holds!* Naturally, place names and dates have been eliminated, but the film was made during the opening weeks of the Nazi invasion and it provides, in its limited scope, a beautifully concise picture and a feeling of what is happening.

You will see the faces of the Russian people, of their Red Army leaders and their government. Stalin is filmed at the signing of the Anglo-Soviet pact. The three great marshals, Voroshilov, Timoshenko, and Budenny, are seen at their respective frontline posts. The camera moves concisely from the rear—where you see the people listening to broadcasts in the streets of Moscow—to the front and the lines immediately behind the front. There are the usual shots of artillery firing, tanks maneuvering, and pursuit and bombardment aircraft flying—and the caliber of the guns and the weight of the tanks are reassuring. But more important, you see the faces of the people who operate these guns and tanks and fleets of planes.

Behind the frontlines you catch the first glimpse of the organized guerrilla fighting that is one of the Soviet Union's great military advances. Here are the people, men and women, in their working clothes, being armed by their government. They receive pistols, rifles, grenades, maps, and provisions, to carry on their disruptive work behind the German lines. The Nazis themselves have testified to the terrific efficiency of these organized heroic "irregulars." You witness their comportment in a small Ukrainian town when the enemy bombers are sighted. Swift, unhysterical, they drive their cattle into the forests, scatter for cover in the surrounding territory. "The luftwaffe," says the commentator's voice, "is not a menace to these people, but a nuisance."

SOVIET GRAPHIC ART

On these two pages are some typical examples of illustrations for children's books in the Soviet Union. Reproduced in full color, the books cost only a few cents apiece—an unheard of price elsewhere—and are available to millions of young readers. Ranging from the charming and whimsical to more serious graphic portrayals, the illustrations are designed to appeal to children of various ages. The samples on these two pages are taken from eight books.

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From the *guerilleros*, you move behind the lines again to see Soviet women working in factory and field, hospitals and homes. Their faces reveal the same confidence, the same lack of panic, that we saw in the photographs from Spain during the battle for the Republic.

These are exclusively the faces of working people—and it is this which makes the scenes contrast most sharply with those we have seen of civilian activity behind the lines in earlier war zones. To one who had been with the Spanish people during their heroic resistance, to watch these faces in this Soviet film was like being back in Spanish cities once again. They were the same; they were the universal faces of the working people of the world, intent upon the task of defending their homeland from invasion and destruction. Proud and confident, these faces presage victory.

ALVAH BESSIE.

★

WRITING a film script is much like writing anything else; you get a bright idea, you put it on paper quickly in the first flush of inspiration, and then the hard work starts. The bright idea will not carry you through the intricate business of developing a coherent plot and credible motivation. For some Hollywood offerings, however, that first fine careless rapture seems to be enough. Behold such a job as *Million Dollar Baby,* which is terribly clever as long as the sap is still rising, but, in its latter two-thirds, as juiceless as last year's pine needles.

For a millionairess to pay a million in conscience money to a department-store girl is not, in this world, inherently probable. It makes a good situation, however. The situation is materially improved when the millionairess, searching for her victim, finds the girl in a Greenwich Village boarding house brightened by Helen Westley and Ronald Reagan. Then the million-dollar check is delivered, the recipient, in a mad splurge, gives away the department store's sixty-nine-cent patent vegetable cutters—free!—and the film has had its last laugh. A limp love story winds its weary way homeward for the next hour or so, ending triumphantly with the heroine renouncing riches and their "responsibilities" for romance.

If *Million Dollar Baby* were altogether bad, this would not matter; we could sneer and pass on. Its first section contains so much rough and honest humor, however, that the marshmallow sundae into which it degenerates is almost tragic. Approaching human character, at first, with a surprising realism, *Million Dollar Baby* soon transforms its people into angels—as if James Joyce had suddenly lapsed into James Hilton. And all this because the film's authors, having had their bright idea, lacked the stamina to sweat over it. The engaging opening scenes are expected to carry the entire show; they don't. There is really brilliant writing, nonetheless, in some of the boarding house scenes, especially in Ronald Reagan's role as a rowdy and forthright young musician. Mr. Reagan, indeed, reveals considerable dexterity as an actor, and deserves better things.

Singapore Woman is a hot tamale which should never have been released in this sort of weather. Miss Brenda Marshall, a decorative piece with an unpleasant voice and no acting ability whatever, is presented as a siren who is fatal to her men. We meet her sunk in degradation and gin in a Singapore dive. True love, in the person of David Bruce, comes to her, and in the space of two days she is a lovely innocent thing and a teetotaler. Plot complications are too numerous and horrible to mention. There is an incoherence in the writing which fits Miss Marshall's style of acting perfectly; nothing the characters say has any connection with what they do. A perfectly good jungle goes to waste, moreover, with David saving Brenda only from one measly crocodile. Scenes of plantation life in the Malay States are supposed to give local color, but I am not sure if the plantation was tea, rubber, or raspberries. To damn with faint praise, let us add that David Bruce is a competent young actor with an intelligent face, poor fellow, and that a nameless Russian singer gets a few good laughs with "Otchi Tchornya."

JOY DAVIDMAN.

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Rodney Stevenson

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GOINGS ON

MARXIST ANALYSIS OF THE WEEK'S NEWS by Joseph Starobin, foreign editor New Masses, Aug. 17, 8:30 P. M., Workers School, 50 E. 13 Street, Admission 25 cents.

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The album is dedicated to the memory of Joe Hill, IWW organizer, poet, and songwriter; and in the spirit of Joe Hill, the first song—from which the album's title is taken—discusses the necessity of sticking together and building the union. "Which Side Are You On?" was written by the two daughters of a Harlan, Ky., miner when the family was "hiding out from the vigilantes." Members of the United Cannery, Agricultural, and Allied Packing Workers of America wrote the words of "Union Train" to the tune of "The Old Ship of Zion." And Woody Guthrie, dustbowl refugee, contributed "Union Maid," to the familiar music of "Redwing." Two other songs in the album are "Get Thee Behind Me" and "I Don't Want." The album, a product of Keynote Recordings, sells for $2.50.

P. B.

★

IF THE hot weather still leaves you with sufficient energy for concentration on string quartets and symphonies, then Columbia Records fills the bill neatly with some pleasant summer offerings. A fine recording of the Mozart "E-Flat Symphony" played by Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic leads the July list. This symphony is one of a famous trio (the other two being the "Jupiter" and the "G Minor") associated with the late Mozart. The greater freedom of form and the undertone of restlessness found in this period of Mozart's works foreshadows the style of the coming Beethoven symphonies and even possesses elements found much later in the Romantics. To interpret this merely as an individual development is to allege that Mozart was totally unaffected by the rapidly approaching French Revolution which was soon to transform the thinking of the entire world. Naturally, as an intelligent and sensitive composer, Mozart was deeply interested in and revolted by a society which regarded creative artists as property. A series of personal experiences with his patrons also served to emphasize the gross injustices practiced under feudalism. These circumstances combined with the effects of certain cultural currents of the time impelled Mozart to produce music far more probing than his earlier elegant style. The "E-Flat Symphony" is one of the fruits of this development. Beecham's reading is forthright and appropriately dramatic.

Mendelssohn might be called "the gay romantic." His musical moments of melancholy or profundity were both brief and unconvincing. But as a creator of the lighter moods, he excelled. His music abounds with a bright lyricism and sparkling vigor. Such a piece is the "Capriccio Brilliant" for piano and orchestra. Composed in his twenty-third year, it has a racy quality throughout. It was meant, as the title suggests, to be a show piece for the piano. The composition's melodic charm gives it a character far superior to the ordinary display number. It is played with the necessary gusto and clarity by Joanna Graudan and the Minneapolis Orchestra under the capable baton of Dimitri Mitropoulos.

L. C.

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